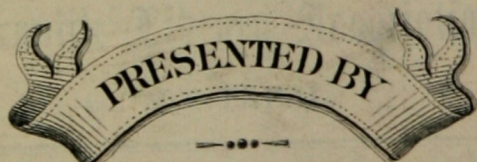
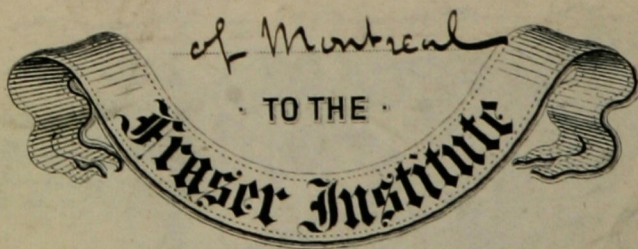


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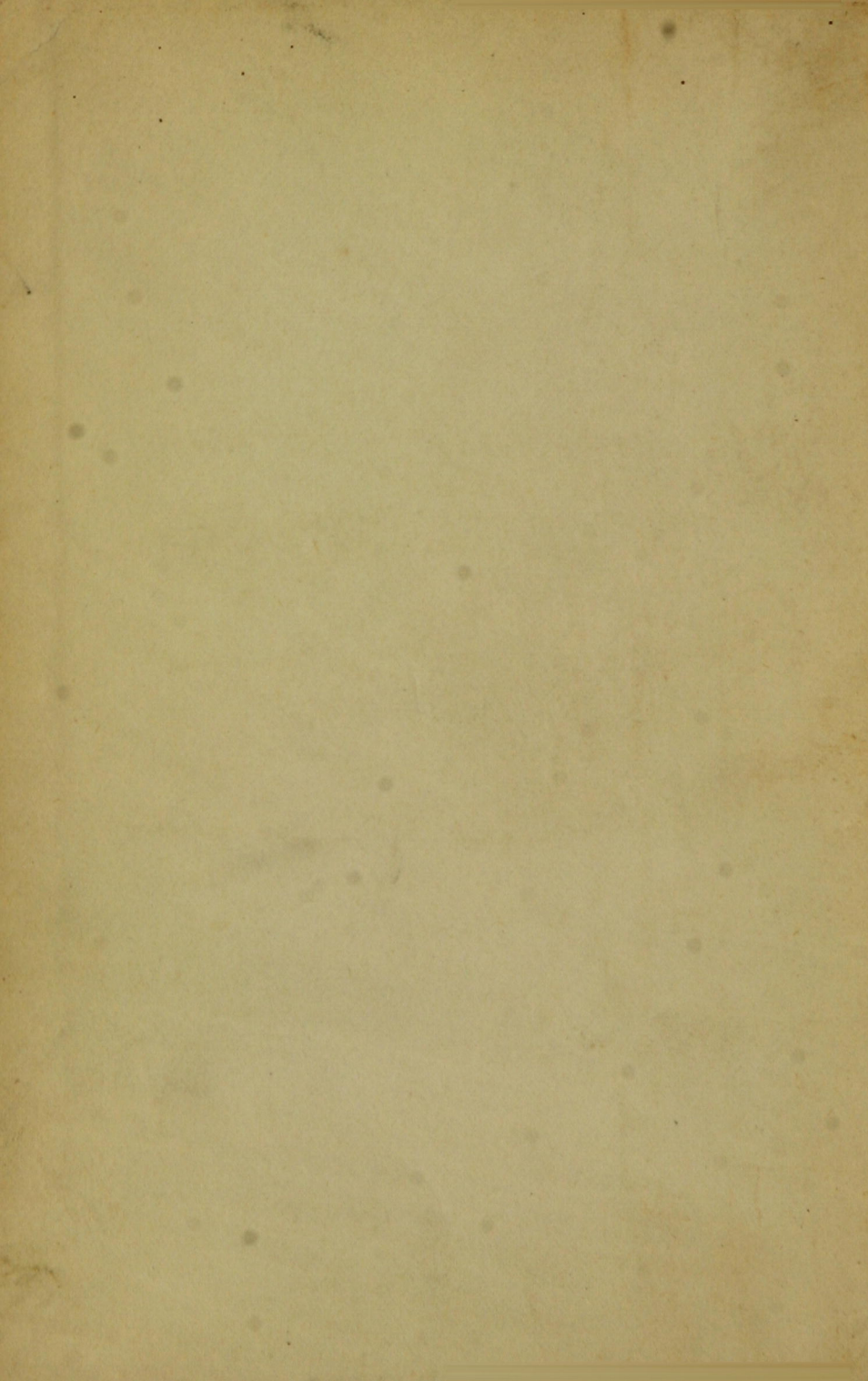


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A BOOK ABOUT DOMINIES.



A BOOK
ABOUT DOMINIES

BEING

THE REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS OF A
MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION.

By Ascott Robert Hope Moncreiff.

Turba, fere censu fraudata, magistri.

EDINBURGH:
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PREFACE.

I SCARCELY know what apology I can offer to the public for obtruding upon its notice a series of unconnected and egotistical essays upon a subject interesting to few,—the life and work of a Schoolmaster. The fact is that I want to talk about myself and my profession, and that I think there is at least as much amusement and instruction in my talk as in that of some other authors of the present day, whose books are printed and praised and taken in at Mudie's. With these very modest pretensions, I send my little book, the work of years, to the press, and, neither anxiously nor indifferently, stand waiting for judgment at the bar of public opinion.



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CHAPTER I.

THE DOMINIE.

‘Is mihi vivere atque frui animâ videtur, qui, alicui negotio intentus, præclari facinoris aut artis bonæ famam quærit.’—CICERO.



AM a dominie. I have spent my life in teaching boys, and it is to give my reader some insight into the joys and sorrows of such a life that I sit down to write these pages, first craving his indulgence if with an old man's garrulity I digress sometimes into my joys and sorrows as a man, not as a dominie. For I have found this Pegasus of mine so hard to catch, that I must be excused for having a good scamper, now that I am mounted. In youth, indeed, that fiery animal runs neighing to meet his master, and readily allows himself to be spurred on to the music of jingling rhyme, or not less poetical prose. But in age he grows lazy and wary, and the would-be author has to approach him slowly and cautiously, alluring him

with tempting offers from publishers, shaken in his ear like a sieve of oats; and when caught he has surely a right to perform the journey at his own pace and in his own way.

I am aware that a dominie's life is often looked down upon by men who are not of nearly so much use in the world. It is supposed to be laborious, unremunerative, ungentlemanly. I don't wish to dispute all this, and I confess that there are but few prizes in the profession to tempt ambitious men to enter it. But I hope that before the reader lays down my work, he will admit the dominie's to be not altogether such an unenviable life, both in a worldly and in a higher point of view.

Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson, who send their sons to be educated by me with about as much consideration as they send to Mr. Smith for their groceries, little think what a great man I am. Not only think myself to be, gentlemen, but am,—in the eyes of your sons at least, who are to be the Browns, and Joneses, and Robinsons of the next generation. My authority over them is enormous. It is a despotism tempered only by epigrams uttered behind my back, and unlimited by Parliaments and the want of supplies. Not even the Emperor of France nor the Queen of Spain can execute with impunity such *coups d'état* as those by which I crush out the first spark of disaffection among my subjects. The King

of Dahomey's power of tyranny is as that of a parish beadle compared to mine. The Czar of all the Russias is not treated by his people with more profound respect. True, when my boys verge towards hobble-de-hoyhood, they often become somewhat affected by the Radical tendencies of the present age, and even among the younger ones there may occasionally be found a juvenile Mazzini or Felix Holt ; but up to a certain age my pupils in general are thoroughly deferential and submissive. How could they be otherwise, when I am sovereign, law-maker, judge, police and executioner all in one ? But I think I am speaking the truth when I say that this authority of mine is more deeply grounded than in mere fear. Boys have a great deal of natural *faith* ; and it requires but little effort on my part to make them believe in my wisdom and justice and dignity. Sometimes passion may get the better of this faith, and they may call me hard names—always behind my back,—but on the whole they believe that they are far more likely to be in the wrong than I ; and it is this belief which is the greatest power I have over them.

I remember when I was a boy, that one of my own masters was, like too many other dominies, harsh, capricious, unrelenting. He made no allowances ; he punished without discrimination—as often unjustly as justly. Well, we did not exactly love this man ; but

we revered him. We took all his harshness and cruelty as a matter of course, and fed with thankfulness upon the rare crumbs of human kindness which from time to time he flung us. We believed in him then, and such is the force of custom that some of us believe in him to this day. Since we grew up, I have heard my old school-fellows talking of this man, and pronouncing him a most excellent man, and a most judicious master. I know better ; but then I have been all through the temple ; I have myself been hidden in the statue and delivered the oracles.

This absolute faith of boyhood, in even a cruel and unjust master, may seem to some ridiculous ; to me it is touching, and even beautiful. And it gives us so much power, that, *pace* the *Record* and the *Guardian*, I consider myself as useful a man as my neighbour, the Rev. Mr. Johnson, the eminent preacher. His calling is nominally more sacred and honourable than mine, but I firmly believe that I have as many, if not more, opportunities of doing good than he. He teaches men ; I teach boys. But not many of his pupils have such faith in him as mine have in me. His are not teachable ; my pupils are. So I maintain that I am more truly a teacher than he, though his office is held in more respect and honour than mine by himself and the world. Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson ask him to dinner, but they do not ask me, though they would perhaps do so if I put

on a white necktie and added the semblance of his profession to the reality of my own. And he pats their boys on the head and tells them 'to be good ;' and they listen in awed acquiescence, believing his kind of goodness to be something above their reach, —something mysteriously connected with a black coat and a white necktie. This impression is deepened when they see him in the pulpit, and hear him promising incomprehensible blessings to those who think and feel as he does, and vaguely hinting at an end of unutterable misery for those who do not. They do not listen much to his sermons, but they listen to and learn from mine, which I preach when I praise the boy who has done what is lovely and of good report, and blame the one who has shown himself base and mean.

Here I may be censured for overstepping the boundaries of my proper profession. But I do not think I do so. I cannot even teach Latin and Greek without preaching against the sin of ignorance. And I try to teach more than Latin and Greek. I believe it to be my duty to train my pupils to be wise and good men, and to set before them, so far as I can, an example of the worthy manhood to which they should strive to attain.

'You teach morality, and quite right,' the orthodox reader will say ; 'but it would be absurd and foolish of you to profess to teach them religion. These are

different things.' Alas ! yes ; in these days they are. We have many religions and many moralities, which are truly different things, yet all more or less based upon the same thing. I believe that there is one religion and one morality, which are one and indivisible, and that, or as much of it as has been revealed to my mortal sight, I strive to teach, leaving it to my boys or their parents to choose the set of dogmas upon which they may think it necessary to pin their faith.

Presumptuous on my part, no doubt, even if not heterodox ! But do you ever think, reader, that we teachers of mankind do not do enough, because we do not try enough ? I know it is so with boys, who are more teachable than men. You can teach them almost anything if you only will. Did not the Spartans teach their boys to be brave and hardy and cunning, and did they not learn the lesson ? Do not we teach our boys to be respectable and gentlemanly, and to go to church and say that they love God ; and do they not learn the lesson readily enough in most cases ? And could we not teach them that to love God is to be pure and wise and brave and kind ? Yes, if we all, parents and teachers, were pure and wise ourselves. For preaching and teaching are different things, as some of the Rev. Mr. Johnson's flock must have found out by this time.

One word to the unthinking and strongly orthodox

reader. God forbid that I should sneer at men of Mr. Johnson's profession. I believe that many of them—most of them—are earnest, well-meaning men, who do their best to serve not only the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland, but the Church of God that liveth for ever. But I think, and cannot help saying, that my profession is as useful and sacred as theirs. The time of their power has gone by—the time when all mankind were children and they were the teachers. Their pupils have grown beyond them, and their true occupation is gone ; we dominies are stepping into their place. God grant us to know and love and teach His truth.

Yes, I have no mean part in the battle of Time. Not, indeed, to go forth into the thick of the fight, but to stay by the tents equipping and encouraging the young knights, polishing the armour and sharpening the weapons which their Lord and King hath given them, reminding them of His power and greatness, and His servants' prowess. I have watched many of these knights ride forth, full of pride and hope. And some have fled basely before the first charge of the foe, deserting their standards and dishonouring their Leader. And some have struggled for a time, and then fainted and fallen by the wayside, their breastplates soiled, and their swords blunted. But more than one has pressed on through

all the darts of the Evil One, in fierce joy and godly sorrow, trampling down him and his works, and has never ceased to strike till he fell in the thick of the battle, with the shout of victory ringing in his ears, and the welcome of the angels' song, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

No, no, my fellow-teachers, our calling is no ordinary one. In after years, when our boys are men, some of them, not the best, will talk of us with ridicule, or even malice. But if we have done our duty, some will look back to our tyranny with love and gratitude, remembering sins that we helped them to conquer, and blessings that we urged them to attain. And I for one would not think my life wasted, if I hoped that I had saved one young soul from the curse of selfishness and deceit—brought one young scholar to learn diligently in the school of God.



CHAPTER II.

HOW I BECAME A DOMINIE.

‘ The strong hand that kindly led
Me to the gates of manhood’s strife,
That first enticed my infant feet
To paddle in the surf of life,
Is gone, and in the deeper sea
I stand, no more a trustful child,
But shivering as the waves close round,
So cold, and dark, and wild.’

HOW did I become a dominie? The question may well be asked of all members of my profession. For while men are destined and trained from their youth to church, law, or physic, they generally become teachers from chance or necessity; and as soon as, or before, they have passed through an apprenticeship, in which they may or may not learn what they are doing, and how to do it, they too often exchange this for some less laborious or more profitable calling. I became a dominie from necessity; I remained one from choice.

Let me for one moment draw aside the curtain of the Past, and reveal to you a scene which is as vividly impressed on my memory as if it took place yesterday, though it was many and long years ago.

A sick-chamber, in which two weeping women and a young man hang over the dying gasps of him who is dearest on earth to them all. No sound is heard but their stifled sobs and the fearfully distinct ticking of the clock on the mantelpiece, till a wild hysterical cry tells that all is over ; and in the grey, sickly light of a spring dawn the young man is closing the dull eyes that will never more brighten with a father's love and pride.

A common and a sad story ; the sadder because it is so common. The hope and stay of a household removed in the prime of life ; an orphan son and daughters sent forth to fight feebly for themselves that battle through which his strong arm had hitherto borne them careless and secure.

He had loved us not wisely but too well. During his lifetime all the comforts and luxuries of our station had been ours ; but, in the pride and strength of his manhood, he had neglected to provide adequately for us in the case of an event which he rashly trusted was far distant. So after his death we found that we must not only give up our home, but would have a hard struggle to live in anything like respectability.

My sisters could do little ; but then they would

cost little. It was I who was at once the burden and the hope of our bereaved family. What could I do? I was twenty-one years of age. I had had an expensive education, which I had expected soon to end in the honours and emoluments of a learned profession. But now that I wished to realize my intellectual acquirements, I found that Latin and Greek would command but little sale in the ready-money market. I was too old for a mercantile office, even if I had not been a very poor hand at figures, and altogether unaccustomed to business habits. There was but one resource open to me. I looked out for a situation as under-master or usher at a private school, and obtained one with little difficulty.

I have read many touching tales of the sufferings of ushers, of the slights put on them by their employers, of the insults they are accustomed to receive from their pupils. I am bound to say that on the whole my experience has been to the contrary. I have been in several such situations, and was generally treated like a gentleman, or at least as much like a gentleman as a young man on sixty pounds a year can expect. But then I fancy I was lucky. From the boys I met often enough with annoyances caused by thoughtlessness, seldom or never with malicious insults. It is a mistake to suppose that boys generally look down on their teachers. It is far oftener their parents who do so. Even an under-master may

generally make himself well enough respected by his pupils, if he likes, and can get on well enough at a boarding-school, where the parents are not at hand to snub him.

Then, I cannot say that I ever found the 'drudgery,' 'monotony,' 'pettiness,' and so forth, in a school-master's life, which so many people seem to think it is composed of. The work was certainly hard; so is most useful work. True, it seemed at first very discouraging to hammer *musa*, *musæ*, and *amo*, *amas*, into one ear of little heads which straightway let it out at the other, but there were daily crumbs of intelligence and interest from more hopeful pupils, which I took and was thankful. And it was a terrible thing at first to assume a magisterial frown and pass *impromptu* sentences which would confine little curly-haired urchins in dull school-rooms, toiling painfully, and perhaps tearfully, with the shouts of their luckier companions ringing in their ears from the playground. And it seemed hard at first to have to hurt the little hands when I would rather have borne the punishment myself, to see tearful eyes looking up at my face, not in rage but entreaty. But on the whole I liked the work, and its very monotony was far from irksome, even enjoyable, to me. Till then I had been a purposeless dreamer, and I felt, for the first time since I had left school, what a good and happy thing it is to have hard and

regular work to do, work which comes to be in itself a pleasure, and makes well-earned hours of rest doubly sweet.

In one way the change in our circumstances little affected me. I had never been a dandy nor a Sybarite, I had never cared for the pleasures of riches. So it was no trial to me to have to wear my coats till they were shabby, and to live on constant roast mutton, suet-dumplings, bread and scrape, and the other dainties of boarding-schools. If it had not been for my sisters I would rather have rejoiced than otherwise in the state of comparative poverty in which I now found myself. And soon all care for their welfare was useless; for they died two years after my father,—died almost on the same day, of an infectious fever, which the one had taken at the bedside of the other—died, and left me alone in the world, alone but for dim memories of their gentle voices and loving smiles, which still come and go in my heart like a strange, incredible dream.

It was indeed well for me in these days of unutterable sorrow, that I had work to do which could occupy my thoughts. If they had not been so occupied I might have gone mad, or written spasmodic poetry. But the kindly stream of fresh, young human life around me, soothed the wounds of my heart, and prevented me from brooding over my grief. From the day that I returned to the school in a new suit of

black, and was stared at by the boys with a mixed feeling of curiosity and sympathy, I gave myself up more completely to them, seeking from them the love of which death had so cruelly bereft me.

I wonder if these thoughtless urchins ever guessed why I tried to be so patient and gentle with them. Did they think it strange of me that I stroked their shaggy heads, and wound my arm round their necks in quiet corners of the playground, inviting them to confide to me their troubles and their pleasures? Did they think me weak because I spent so much time in remonstrating with naughty boys, who ought to have been soundly whipped, and who, in fact, used to wink at their companions while I was appealing to their good feelings, and exhorting them to penitence? Most likely they thought and called me a soft, easy-going fellow, and rejoiced in my being so, after the manner of boys. They never could have known how eagerly I was yearning for them to love me, and to let me love them.

The death of my sisters made it no longer necessary for me to be a schoolmaster. I had now means of continuing my studies long enough to enter some learned profession. My friends strongly urged me to this, and took much trouble to point out to me the disadvantages of my position, and describe in glowing colours the prizes I might attain to in the Church or the law. My ambition was roused, but

mine is one of those natures which, having once come to run in any fixed rut of life, cannot, without a great effort, tear themselves out of it, and begin to wear away another. For some little time I hesitated, uncertain which path to choose, though rather inclined to the one which was beginning to grow familiar to me.

In this doubtful state of mind I went up to London in the Christmas holidays on business, which detained me there some days. I remember the visit well. I remember it because then for the first time I passed Christmas-eve, not at the friendly fireside of a kindly home, but wandering restlessly and sadly through the cold, busy streets of the great city, in which I had not a friend. And I remember how, at midnight, as I crossed Trafalgar Square, the bells of St. Martin's pealed forth a joyful strain, loudly proclaiming the peace and good-will of Heaven to all mankind. The sound swelled into my troubled heart, and filled it with a blessed happiness akin to sorrow, so that I went home to my humble lodging lonely, yet not alone, and gave thanks to God for telling me that He, at least, is love.

Next day I made my way through the sloppy streets to an old-fashioned church in the city. It was a dark, dingy church, very sparsely attended, and the clergyman was a worthy, dull man, and the charity children who formed the choir might have sung much better ; but there was a reason why I should prefer

that old church to the more fashionable temples, which were no farther distant from my lodgings. For there, one Sunday, when we were staying at a neighbouring hotel, I had gone with him whom I thought wisest, and kindest, and bravest on earth ; and I wished to sit once more in the moth-eaten pews, and to fancy that I sat by his side, and looked up into his face.

Sitting in that dingy church that Christmas morning, and many, many times besides, I have felt how true are the words of a great song of sorrow—

‘ ’Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.’

For there is no joy of life so sweet as to feel the memories of the dead hovering round us like angels’ wings, guarding us from the powers of evil, softening and cleansing our hard hearts.

The sermon preached on that Christmas morning was, I have no doubt, excellent in its way ; sound, pointed, and appropriate. But I heard little of it. While the preacher was reading his carefully-written pages, I was thinking—dreaming, if you will. I thought of the happy Christmases long ago, and the familiar little country church, gay with evergreens, where I sat by the side of my father, joining my childish voice in the joyful strain of the herald angels, and gravely repeating the mysteries of the Athanasian Creed. I thought how beautiful that Christmas hymn was, and wished it were sung every day in the

hearts of all men. I thought with wonder, not unmixed with sorrow, of that creed in which my fellow-worshippers had just declared, with much satisfaction, that they believed in certain subtle, metaphysical definitions of their God ; and furthermore, that whosoever did not so believe, 'without doubt should perish everlastingly.' I thought of streets which I had passed through that morning where there was but little joy for the peace and goodwill of heaven ; little but poverty, misery, wickedness. I thought of another street I had passed by, where the devil dares to show his face in the shop-windows, where I had seen immortal men buying and selling that which I could not but blush to look at. I thought of the grim prison hard by, teeming with iniquity and godlessness. I thought of the rich mansions of the great city, so many of them inhabited by men and women who forget their God, or alas ! remembering Him, yet bow down to the Rimmons of this heathen world. And then a great yearning rose suddenly in my heart, a strong eagerness to go forth and do battle with this mighty devil, to save not only myself, but my brethren, from their sins ; to do something to make God's kingdom come, not to a few, but into the hearts of all His children.

Should I become a clergyman, sign the Thirty-nine Articles, wear black, and devote myself to reading essays upon Justification by Faith, and the

wisdom of the Church of England? No ; even if I had wished to enter this respectable profession, I felt that I could not do so without lying to my own heart. I could not take my stand by any one of the little heap of dogmas which various 'churches' have gathered together and proclaimed to be the infinite sum of God's truth.

Should I go forth, like the Master I would follow, into the lanes and byways of the land, to comfort and succour and teach the poor? I might try to do good, as He did, without the stamp and the pay of any church. But alas ! I felt how unequal I was to such a task. I had been brought up as a 'gentleman ;' I had never associated with my fellow-men of lower rank, so as to know their wants and trials. I saw and heard that men suffered hunger and cold and nakedness on every side of me, yet I knew not what I could do to help them.

And yet was I to do nothing for God,—for God, who was daily so good to me, who had not made me ignorant and wicked and miserable as others are? Was I to enjoy His countless blessings without lifting a hand to fight in His battle? Was I to sing hymns about His goodness and glory—and nothing more?

A trivial circumstance changed the course of my thoughts just then. Right opposite me was a gallery in which sat three or four rows of boys, sadly inattentive, like me, to the sermon, and not so decorously

quiet as I was. A familiar sound made me look up, and I saw that the beadle had struck one of them with a little cane which he carried to maintain some show of order. The man in authority turned away, and the little culprit rubbed his hand across his eyes, and indulged in a few submissive tears. But there was another boy, a little black-eyed fellow, doubtless a Cockney *fidus Achates* of the first, who shook his fist behind the beadle's back with a look of intense indignation which I shall never forget, and then turned to comfort his friend.

I could not help being pleased with the vehemence of the little fellow's friendship. No doubt they were both naughty boys, and richly deserved all they got from the much-enduring beadle. But was this altogether a wicked feeling which was sparkling out of those black eyes? Was there not in it something of the divine flame of love which is the essence of all virtue? He never reasoned as to whether his friend was justly punished or not, but he loved him, and was angry because he had been hurt. At an earlier part of the service, I had seen the same boy get a sharper cut across the knuckles, which he bore with great equanimity, and presently winked derisively for the benefit of his companions.

And this set me thinking that there is no boy so wicked and stupid and disrespectful, but lurks in his heart some desire to love and to be loved, some

feeling which teaches him that he cannot hope to find happiness in himself alone, but must look for it in being just and kind to his neighbours. And thus, in the midst of sin and sorrow, we have love and kindness springing up in spite of thorns and weeds. Some call this our own righteousness, and speak of it with great contempt as filthy rags, but I believe it to be a little ray of the Spirit of God, ever shining, faintly or brightly, in the hearts of His children, to remind them that its full glory is their destined end and inheritance.

And to tend and foster this ray in the hearts of the young—for God has ordained that it may be fostered by human means—would this not be a worthy and useful work for a man who was eager to do his Lord's work?

This was the very work I was doing. The thought came to me suddenly, and yet so plainly, that I wondered I had not perceived it before. As a teacher I had daily opportunities of doing what I longed to do, something to make my fellow-men better and wiser and happier.

The clergyman had pronounced the blessing, and the congregation were dispersing, but I lingered behind in the pew to make a silent vow, which I had resolved upon in a moment—that all my life I would be a schoolmaster, and would devote myself to teaching wisdom to boys, not only the wisdom which is for

colleges and libraries, not that which is for Sundays and controversial pamphlets, but the pure Wisdom which is one with Goodness and Happiness, and is for every day and hour of life.

Thus I became and remained a Schoolmaster.



CHAPTER III.

SCHOOLBOYS.

'Oh ! sweet were these untutored years,
Their joys and pains, their hopes and fears,
There was a freshness in them all,
Which we may taste but not recall.'—PRAED.



DO not think it will be considered out of place if I devote a portion of this book to the raw material upon which dominies have to work—boys. I am going to speak up for boys ; but let the reader understand that I use this word here and nearly everywhere throughout my book in a limited sense, that will be sufficiently apparent to all having patience to peruse the next two chapters, which shall be devoted to considering the nature, opinions, and habits of the rising generation.

I hereby indignantly declare that I believe boys to be a much maligned and much misunderstood class of the community. They are the Ishmaelites of

polite society ; every one's hand and voice being against them. 'Expensive,' complains paterfamilias, spectacles on nose, mournfully turning over the leaves of his ledger ; 'noisy, careless,' moans mamma, gazing in despair upon a pile of torn trousers and worn socks ; 'idle, disgracefully idle,' declares Dr. Birch from the depths of his experience ; 'vulgar,' pronounces Lady Clara Vere de Vere, with the languid contempt so becoming to that sweet female ; 'irreverent,' squeaks the old dotard Mrs. Grundy, looking down ruefully at her despised apron-strings ; 'troublesome, meddlesome, mischievous, restless,' responds a chorus of tutors, governesses, nursery-maids, old bachelors, dandies, flunkeys, and such like. To which, add the wise judgment of a certain ancient lady, much approved of by other old women of both sexes, viz. :—that all male animals between the ages of ten and twenty-one should be shut up and carefully preserved in glass cases, where they might only be seen and not heard, and not require to be whipped nor scolded, nor give any other trouble to their elders.

What a world this would be, then, with so much of its small share of innocence and happiness and health taken away ! Perhaps it would be as calamitous to shut up all the girls, though some sages have thought otherwise ; but for the present I have nothing to do with them. I have undertaken to stand up simply for boys, who, in my opinion, do not get their full

share of credit from the general public, and still less from the literary public.

So much being asserted concerning my views about boys, I shall proceed to lay down three propositions to assist the logical consideration of my subject.

First, that boys are not wicked ; that is, not more wicked than other people, but rather the reverse.

Second, that boys are not unhappy ; that is, not more unhappy than other people, but quite the reverse.

Third, that boys are not members of the Social Science Association, but distinctly the reverse.

In the discussion of these assertions, it must be understood that I claim to speak authoritatively in the name of boyhood, reminding scoffers that I have studied the habits and thoughts and feelings of boys with the deepest interest ever since I was a boy myself. Let no one contradict me who has taken less pains to master the subject.

In the first place, then, I deny that boys are more disposed to evil than their elders. That they have many peculiar faults arising from thoughtlessness and want of self-control, I admit ; but, on the whole, I maintain their superior virtue, if it is to be estimated by amount of real moral depravity, and not by the mere effect of what I will call latent energy. This is, in every physically and mentally healthy boy, a part of his nature, and irresistibly drives him to run, jump,

laugh, break, tear, make a noise, and otherwise give occasion to unsympathizing guardians to scold and punish. I admit the value of gradually teaching the young thoughtfulness and self-control, but I cannot for one moment place this against the great danger of confounding in the youthful mind such faults with the fruits of moral depravity ; nor the equal risk of bottling up such energies, to burst forth at length with more force, but in some less harmless direction. The truly wise educator will take care to let this latent energy of youth have some natural vent, or if it becomes inconvenient in any particular form, will distinctly prohibit it in that form, and repress it under the head of disobedience, but will never forget that to treat it as real sin will only dim a boy's moral perceptions, lessening his respect for virtue and abhorrence of crime.

Having had this rap at many of their elders, who won't make allowance for the effervescence of young blood, I deny that boys are merely restless animals without moral sense or reflection. On the contrary, I believe them to be full of generous emotions, which too often grow colder and fewer as they approach the tainted atmosphere of manhood. Have you never known a boy share his last penny with a friend, and perhaps grow up to be a money-grub who dabbles greedily in filthy lucre, speculates rashly with other people's money, fails for ten shillings in the pound,

begins again with funds secured to his wife, and then retiring from business, lives leisurely and respectably all the rest of his life? Or have you never seen a boy flushed with honest rage, fling down his cap, and rush, with his hair streaming in the wind, to fierce combat with the bigger boy who is bullying the small one, whence arise many wounds and more than one darkened organ of vision; and could you believe that such a boy would afterwards become a steady, industrious lawyer, with no sense of right and wrong except such as can be retained by a certain number of guineas? Look on these pictures and on those, and say if you can recognise the smooth cheeks and frank eyes of the boy in the furrowed features of the man.

I maintain that boys are eminently more honest than their elders; and honesty is something in this age of falsehood. They shuffle with their feet and yawn in church, while well-behaved people only think what a long sermon Dr. Orthodox is giving them, or wonder how on earth Mrs. Fastman has managed to get another new bonnet. They, when they have conceived a low opinion of any of their companions, are accustomed to tell him so openly and forcibly, and do not understand the art of being polite to a person before his face, while they slander him behind his back. In fact, boys generally have a strong prejudice in favour of outspokenness and calling things

by their right names. Certain eminent divines might possibly be considered hypocrites by these irreverent young persons ; and I know of several highly respectable and affluent laymen who in youthful society would be denominated swindlers.

Now, a word upon one of the greatest sins ascribed to boys—their delight in inflicting pain upon others. I do not deny that there is much evil in what is popularly called ‘bullying,’ but I do not believe that it is so great as mammas and sisters seem to think. It must be remembered that boys are to a certain extent fond of pain, both to give and to suffer it ; and therefore we must not judge them by our standard in this respect, nor by the wailings of certain little darlings who have apparently mistaken their sex, and ought to have been put into petticoats and sent to a lady’s boarding-school to learn crochet and deportment. I am convinced that what is often called cruelty in a boy is a mere love of pain for its own sake, not for the purpose of making miserable the victim, who for his part is generally not altogether an unwilling sufferer. I remember that, when an urchin, newly fledged at a public school, I looked rather with respect and esteem than otherwise upon a big boy—how *very* big he seemed then !—who recreated himself nightly by thrashing me and my fellows, varying the amusement by putting us to stand in a corner with our faces to the wall to meditate upon a pleasant

promise that if we turned round he would throw a slate at us. And yet this monitor was a good-hearted enough fellow, who never meant to make us miserable, and would doubtless have stopped his tortures at once if he saw them producing that effect. And Alexander was not prouder of his conquests than we were of these experiences, the memory of which we treasured up for years, and proudly narrated to new generations of boys, as traditions of a golden age that was to come no more to our schoolboy world.

The fact is that there is a line between real and apparent bullying which it is not easy to draw, especially in print. But, indignant reader, if you can catch any heartless wretch playing on your darling's moral sensibilities, and poisoning his innocent imagination with falsehoods and terrors and filthiness, we give him up to your unsparing vengeance, and with a hearty goodwill too, for we should like to wash our fingers of the beast. There are such boys, who deserve to lose all their boyhood and become men at once.

I assert, in the second place, that the lot of boys is not so unhappy as some people seem to think,—people who can't imagine it possible to live without feather-beds, cunning cooks, eau-de-cologne, kid gloves, and so forth, and who talk compassionately of 'poor Dick,' or 'poor Willy,' or 'poor Charley,' as the case may be, Dick, Willy, and Charley being perhaps at that moment quite cheerful and contented inmates of

some scholastic establishment, where Virgil, cricket, cane, mutton, rice pudding, bread and butter, and pillow fights form the great part of the routine of what is to them a very enjoyable life—not that holidays and an occasional dip into home luxuries are despised by them. I remember many of my boyish sorrows, I know that there were still more which I have long forgotten, distance lending enchantment rather than gloom to the retrospective view of youth. I remember the bully who took such a delight in twisting my arms in the playground and pinching me in school, and I have an equally vivid recollection of the offended big boy whose vague threat to ‘kick’ me formed for a week the chief terror of my juvenile existence, and of another considerate young gentleman who laid wait for me every day after school, and appointed me to the honourable but onerous duty of carrying home his books, therewith conferring on me the title of ‘baggage-mule.’ I remember the frown and—*infandum renovare dolorem!*—the cane of a certain master who then seemed to be without pity, but whom I now know to have been cruel only to be kind. And oh! I remember how slowly that provoking school clock used to go, when in an hour I expected to be locked in kind arms that will embrace son or daughter no more on earth. But I can scarcely remember one sorrow which left more than a passing cloud on my heart, to be dispelled by the

next of those happy sunbeams abounding on the path of boyhood. And even when the greatest sorrow of all came—the sorrow of looking tremblingly on a white face that once was sweet with smiles, and kissing cold lips that were never more to speak lovingly and cheerfully—even that sorrow, by God's mercy, was not allowed to rest too long nor too heavily on the fresh young heart.

And whatever were the sorrows of youth, they were amply made up for by the joys—the joy of health and innocence—the joy of a pure fresh life, welling up in careless mirth and buoyant activity—the joy of boyish dangers and labours and sufferings—the joy of boyish friendships, precarious but sincere—the joy of leaning on a father's arm or playing with a mother's curls, and believing them to be the best and wisest and kindest of men and women. Ah! that such pure joys should come no more to the hard heart of mankind, toiling, panting, wearying for alluring pleasures, which but crumble to bitter ashes in the hand of their possessor. I believe firmly that the very restraint placed upon youth is half the cause of its happiness, for by far the greater part of our miseries in this world arises from our following the guidings of our own weak wills. And, in sober earnest, I declare that I could, if it were God's will, give up all the rest of my life to enjoy once more the happiness of a pure and healthy boyhood.

In the third place, I have asserted that boys are not members of the Social Science Association, with which I may state two kindred dogmas.

Also—

That they are not students of Proverbial Philosophy.

Moreover—

Neither do they habitually cultivate the acquaintance of Mrs. Grundy.

In brief—

That they have a natural aversion to humbug in general and to theoretical palavering in particular.

I believe that on no subject has more nonsense been talked during the last few years than about boys. Some wise philosophers have discovered, for instance, that they are 'overworked,' and this idea being taken up by fond mammas has created some sensation. Now, among all the hundreds of boys whom I have known, I have never met with one who voluntarily injured himself with hard work, and only with one or two who allowed themselves to be thus injured by foolish mammas or cramming tutors, though I have noticed several cases where the reverse statement might hold true. Six hours' work a day, or even a little more, can never hurt any healthy boy, and it is simply nonsense to say that it will. Certainly, however, in these learned days, when so many and so great premiums are offered for cramming and

intellectual mummyism, it may be as well to remind us of the danger of all work and no play, so I don't quarrel very bitterly with the Social Science Association for this. But the reader must sympathize with my sufferings for six months after the meeting of the above-mentioned body in the town I inhabit, when I was driven to despair by the mammas of half my scholars, who insisted on propounding and explaining to me their theories of education.

Boys have no nonsensical ideas of this kind. They don't like their lessons, perhaps, but it is on practical, not theoretical grounds. They have a dim, but sound and healthy perception of what is good for them, so they work on at their tasks, with only a natural amount of grumbling. And, if they do wrong, and get flogged, they take it as a matter of course, with more or less contrition, and do not raise a cry about punishment being 'degrading' and 'brutalizing,' and so forth, as certain of their elders do. Therefore say I, that boys have more common-sense than some older people, and to that common-sense I should like to refer some of the proposed reforms in school management, which we hear so much about now-a-days.

And oh ! what a blessed mutual estrangement there is between the healthy mind of honest youth and that personified embodiment of conventionality yclept by satiric moralists Mrs. Grundy ! Boys don't value one

another by any number of flunkeys, nor by proximity to the West End, nor by the standard of a fashionable tailor but by powers at cricket or Virgil, football or Homer, by courage and strength and prudence, by endurance of pain, and, most of all, by readiness to be kind, genial, unselfish. Oh happy beings, among whom patched trousers are signs of honour, and high hats objects of detestation, and into whose simple hearts the lessons of fashion and gentility have yet to be instilled by discreet parents and ambitious companions!

I have proved, much to my own satisfaction at least, that boys have more goodness, more happiness, and less humbug than their elders. But it is with sorrow and alarm that I confess that there are but few boys now-a-days,—among the young people whom I am acquainted with, at least. The sons of our gentry speedily scorn the chrysalis state of boyhood, and soar forth as genteel youths with kid gloves, and canes, and sham jewellery, who drink bad beer, smoke vile cigars, swear foully, and do all they can to make themselves into small men. No compliment this to their elders, that getting into bad habits should be so often the first stage of that process. A true boy is to me so pure and holy, that it fills me with the bitterest grief to see him thus corrupted. Oh boys, boys, you don't know what you are throwing away with these healthy, happy years of boyhood. Run, play, laugh,

and be merry while you can, for the toils and anxieties of manhood are coming upon you but too soon and too surely, with their weary weight of care and their restless craving for honour and wealth. And blessed will he be who can carry into and through them the simple, trustful heart of a boy, yea even to the everlasting gates of the Eternal City which all who have such hearts may enter into, there for ever to rest peacefully and joyfully on the bosom of their Father.



CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN.

‘Sir, we be young gentlemen.’—ASCHAM.

‘In cute curandâ plus æquo operata juventus.’—HORACE.

BEFORE I am half through my last chapter, there rings in my ears a scornful cry of blame and derision from fathers, mothers, uncles, sisters, and other much-enduring individuals intrusted with the care of young animals of the male sex. ‘Is this stupid fellow mad, that he talks to us of the innocence and simplicity and faith of boyhood? Are we not daily pestered and plagued by boys who are unruly and disrespectful, who will not obey our orders nor listen to our good advice who fraternize with bad companions, and learn to smoke and swear, whose heads are always running on fine clothes and dancing-parties, and who seem to require three times as much money as we did at their age? Where are your innocence and simplicity

here? Be silent, dreamer, and don't talk to practical people.'

Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen. I have been praising boys. The animals you have been describing are not called boys at all in my vocabulary, but *young gentlemen*, a very different race. And, though I love boys, I hate young gentlemen.

Yes, it is a sad fact, that about the age of fourteen, sooner or later, many of my boys undergo a fatal transformation. The external symptoms are unmistakable, and the disease, when once it has got a firm hold, is almost incurable. First, they begin to neglect their boyish sports, and to lounge about the playground, talking nonsense, or worse. No hockey nor 'tig,' *alias* 'dab,' for our young gentlemen, to crush their collars or dirty their boots. They often, however, show great zeal for cricket, fencing, or any other kind of amusement which gives them an excuse for investing themselves in gorgeous flannel raiment. But more likely they devote themselves to playing on the piano. Then they take to walking about the streets, got up in what they fondly conceive to be the first style of the fashion. They wear gloves and carry canes. When I was at school, any boy who appeared with a ring on his finger would have been teased out of his mind, and we know that even the great Mr. Toots only ventured to put his on in the holidays, but all the young gentlemen

of the present day are unblushingly thus adorned. I saw a boy of fourteen to-day, who wore an enormous battered old ring which had apparently belonged to his grandmother. I noticed this with inward laughter while I was engaged in ornamenting his hand in another manner, through the same agency as Jacob employed for the same purpose upon Laban's cattle. Then while, *consule Planco*, as Horace and the author of 'Tom Brown' would say, we used to have a pair of corduroys for school wear, and a pair of cloth trousers for Sundays, our modern young gentlemen go to a wild excess in the matter of peg-tops, some of them possessing as many as four pairs. It will be well for their afflicted friends and relatives if they do not adorn themselves in enormous paper collars, with broad, coloured stripes. They begin to look with an envious eye upon their papa's jewellery, and regard a gold watch-chain as the *summum bonum* of life. They manifest great eagerness to go out to dancing-parties, and profess to like the society of young ladies, before whom, however, they are generally dumb. They make up for this silence though by talking about them behind their backs in a way that is very ridiculous, and certainly not edifying. God forgive them! they often pretend to take a pride in foul thoughts and words which it is to be hoped they scarcely understand. They make furtive attempts to smoke cigars, whence arise unutterable woes. They take

wine now when it is offered to them, and try hard to like it. They turn up their noses at bread and butter and early dinners. They are made miserable by thinking that their jackets are too short, or by not being allowed to have stand-up collars. Poor creatures! Well were it for them if the author of Sartor Resartus could be brought to bear upon their benighted understandings.

This is the terrible disease which corrupts the healthy happiness of boyhood. It steals on silently and insidiously, often breaking out in boys whom you would never suspect of being infected. I remember a bright, merry boy of thirteen, who gloried in noise, and mud, and running and climbing and jumping, and who always looked happy and untidy. I remember how certain circumstances led him to say to me, with boyish sincerity, 'I hope I shall never be a swell!' and thereupon I rejoiced over him as over one saved from destruction. Alas! within a year the infection had seized him. He broke out into all the unhealthy bloom of a boyish dandy, and exhibited even more dangerous symptoms.

The malady has sometimes a sharp tussle though with the naturally strong constitution of boyhood. Long after the main body of the fortress is taken, some out-of-the-way corner of the boyish heart will continue to hold out against Mrs. Grundy. I heard lately a very touching tale about a young gentleman

who had not altogether lost his boyishness, and among other signs and tokens thereof, delighted to wear a belt round his trousers instead of braces. His parents—blind votaries of Mrs. Grundy!—wished to persuade him out of this habit, and propounded unto him this dilemma, that if he did not give up his belt he should not go to a ball at which he hoped to make his *début* in the fashionable world. It was a hard struggle between the belt and the ball, between the old boy and the new man; but I grieve to say that Mrs. Grundy conquered. He gave up the belt and went to the ball; and I don't think he made the best choice.

Not only does young-gentlemanliness display itself in outward appearance, but in preternatural wisdom. As Solomon in all his glory was never in his own estimation anything like one of our boy dandies got up for an occasion, so those who have hitherto cherished the delusion that Solomon was the wisest man on earth would have to confess themselves grievously mistaken if they knew many of our young gentlemen. They know everything; they don't require to be taught. They have no faith in those who are older and more experienced: they believe in themselves—a most heathenish belief. You may tell them what is truly good and what is truly evil: they will not believe you. You may tell them that to be manly is to be brave and sensible and honourable and unselfish, but you will speak to the winds if

their measure of manliness lies in fashionable trousers and attempts at dissipation. I was not quite right in saying that they believe only in themselves ; they believe in one another, which is much the same thing. They are slaves to Mrs. Grundy, bound with a heavier chain than even diligent votaries of the handbook of etiquette. Your weighty words they neglect, but they dare not set themselves against the sneers of their companions, Dick, Tom, and Harry. And though they do not listen to those of their elders who speak truth, they listen readily and obediently enough to those who speak falsehood. They drink in the poisonous words of those who put good for evil and evil for good—who call sweet bitter and bitter sweet. They are but too eager to learn the lessons of those who teach that we are sent into this world, not to be good and wise and happy, but to eat and drink and take our thoughtless pleasure like the brutes that perish. We are all teaching something in this world of ours, and this is the cursed lesson men learn from us, if we set ourselves to teach no other. Ah ! when we have reformed all our old gentlemen, we shall have more hope of the young generation.

Young gentlemen, being so wise in their own conceit, are not easily controllable. They won't obey rules ; they don't like being scolded. This might be well enough ; I know some boys who hate being

scolded, though they have no objection to be honestly flogged if they do wrong. But our young gentleman has a great abhorrence of punishment, and especially of what Radical orators and cheap school advertisements call 'corporal punishment.' He can't bear to be struck; it lowers his dignity. Plautus understood the nature of the animal when he wrote—

'Cum librum legeres, si unam peccavisses syllabam,
Fieret corium tam maculosum, quam est nutricis pallium.

At nunc, priusquam septuennis est, si attingas eum manu,
Extemplo puer pædagogo tabulâ dirumpit caput.'

This is what we are coming to. In our youth the age of tail coats and stuck-up collars was longer deferred, and no boy below that age would ever have dreamt of complaining of being flogged, though that operation was performed upon us far oftener and upon far slighter grounds than at present. But now you will see a brat of fourteen set himself up to be disobedient and impertinent to you, and then sulk and fume if you are obliged to give him a well-deserved thrashing. I was once acquainted with a school—I beg pardon, an establishment; our young gentlemen don't like the word school—for the education solely of young gentlemen, not boys. There was no playground at that school, no noise, no canes,—nothing so vulgar. The pupils, or students if you will call them so, came to school with dainty walking-sticks and dirty lavender kid gloves. They were a

most genteel set of youths, and some people thought very highly of that school. I did not. Well, there was a master at that school who used to go by the name of 'Snuffy,' on account, I suppose, of the seediness of his apparel. Poor fellow! he could afford no better, for he was not a petted schoolboy, but only an assistant master, working hard, very likely, for the support of a wife or mother. And there was a boy at that school whom we will call Smith. He is now an officer and a gentleman, and I daresay he would be ashamed of himself if he were reminded of what I am going to tell; and I believe officers and gentlemen don't like to feel ashamed of themselves. Because this Mr. Snuffy was poor and ill-dressed and only an under-master, Master Smith and his genteel companions took great delight in being rude to him, and often sorely tried his patience,—under-masters, be it known, having feelings like other men. One day Master Smith carried his presumption so far that wicked Mr. Snuffy lost his temper and gave the boy a cuff. Master Smith's ears weren't much hurt, but his dignity was. When I was at Dr. Birch's, how a boy would have been laughed at who made any fuss about such a trifle! But our young gentlemen hold more enlightened views. Master Smith, with the approbation of his companions, went to the principal of the establishment and made an indignant complaint, and the end of the matter was that Mr. Snuffy

had to leave the school. And if I had had my way with Master Smith I should have taken him to the place of business of the nearest spirit medium, and there delivered him over, bound hand and foot, to the shade of Dr. Busby. We can guess the result of the interview.

It may easily be imagined that such young gentlemen are a source of much tribulation to all who exercise authority over them, especially if these forget that they bear not the rod in vain. The difficulties of dominies of the present day may be imagined, not understood, by laymen. I was lately speaking despairingly of a young gentleman's conduct to a very worthy man who is not a dominie. 'Oh,' he said, kindly wishing to give me a hint, 'there is just one thing you must do,—appeal to his common sense.' Good advice; but what if, for obvious reasons, it be impossible to follow?

Young gentlemen do not love the truth, which I cannot be surprised at, believing, as I do, that young-gentlemanliness comes from the Father of Lies. Their pride, indeed, generally forbids them to utter open falsehoods, but they think no shame of equivocations, and evasions, and petty trickeries, which an honest little schoolboy often would feel disgraced by and soundly whipped for. Then they strongly object to be rebuked, in fitting terms, if detected in deceit. I have more than once got into serious disfavour on

this account with young gentlemen under my charge. Unfortunately I am one of those who hold that every man, either as a Christian or a gentleman, is bound to take notice of falsehood only in words of the utmost contempt and abhorrence. But to call a spade a spade, and a lie a lie, is an abomination unto the young gentleman.

You will understand now why it pains me to see a boy transformed into a young gentleman. A boy, is to me such a pure and happy being that it is very sad to see his healthy, honest nature polluted by bumptiousness, silliness, and foppery. I hate slavishness in boys or men, but I hate false independence also. I like courtesy; I think we can never begin too early to teach boys to be pitiful and courteous. I know of worthy men who do harm to themselves and the good doctrines they teach by neglecting to be courteous in little things. But true courtesy is the service of God; the superficial politeness of our young gentlemen is only an attempt at the service of Mrs. Grundy. Then as to dress, I do not wish all boys to be attired in a Quaker uniform. I love beauty—real, *natural* beauty. I like to look at a daisy because it is pure and fresh and simple. And I like to see an untidy boy, if he look brave and happy and frank—in a word, boyish. But I hate to see a young gentleman destroying his boyish comeliness by making himself into a caricature of a dandy.

And the saddest thing about young-gentleman-

liness is that the effects of it are so often permanent. In some, indeed, they pass off in an eruption of boyish vanity, and the patients turn out good and sensible men. It would be well if it were so with all. Too often the poison sinks deeply and darkly into the heart. Too many men, looking back on the milestones of a life-road of ruin and misery, think with bitter sorrow of the day when they sold their boyish birthright for a deadly draught of folly that seemed then so sweet, the day when they began to trust in their own weak strength, and walk in the light of their own blinded eyes and in the ways of their own foolish hearts. And now they know—!

I may seem to think too seriously of the evil which I speak of thus lightly. We all speak lightly of folly, but we should think of it seriously as the handmaid of crime. And, therefore, I think we should set ourselves resolutely to keep down the folly of the rising generation, to keep them boys till the legitimate period of hobble-de-hoyhood arrive. Much of the evil of young-gentlemanliness is due to our own fault. The worst effects of it are remediable, if the symptoms be observed and treated in time. I venture to subjoin a prescription which I believe to be very efficacious in such cases, and which has been highly approved of by the most eminent physicians. It is short and simple:—

Lignum cannæ, 3 *ft.*

To be applied externally. The dose to be repeated, if necessary.



CHAPTER V.

MY BOYS.

' Their welfare pleased him and their cares distressed,
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given.

GOLDSMITH.



ALWAYS call them my boys. I love them all as if they were my own sons. It seems to me that all dominies should be single men, that not having any children of their own, they may learn better to love other people's.

I have had a great many boys under my charge at the different schools in which I have held situations. Many highly respectable middle-aged gentlemen, some of them six feet high, and with long, fierce beards, were my boys once, though they wouldn't know me in the street now, nor, probably, even remember my name. But I was a great man once in their little world. They called me perhaps by a nick-

name, not a very complimentary one. They noticed with much interest when I got a new coat. They obeyed my orders without question. You have all heard of Mr. Goldleaf, partner in the rich banking firm of Goldleaf and Sons. You have seen his benevolent countenance ornamented with spectacles and high collars on the platform of Exeter Hall ; you have heard the cheers which followed the announcement of his munificent subscription to the funds of the Indigent Organ-grinders' Society. Well, I remember Johnny Goldleaf thinking himself highly honoured because I asked him to run back to the schoolroom for my hat ; but my readers may suppose that I couldn't ask him to do so now. *Tempora mutantur*. Then there's Mr. Newlight, whose congregation have found it necessary to build such a large church for him. I remember giving him a most satisfactory caning for—well, never mind. He is not the first good man who has been a naughty boy. And the other day, as I was taking my afternoon walk, I found myself seized from behind by a huge individual in nautical costume, who wrung my hand with a grip that left it tingling for five minutes, and bluntly intimated that he recognised me as his old master.

‘I'm not afraid of you now, sir,’ said the honest sailor with a great guffaw. ‘Lord ! what a plague I used to be to you !’ He was right there.

But those whom at present I consider myself en-

titled to call 'my boys,' are the members of a certain class, in a certain school in a certain city, the name of which it neither pleases me to tell nor concerns my reader to know. Enough that it is a renowned city, which is celebrated for learning, and boasts of many dominies, some of them wise, some of them foolish.

I have now held my situation in this school for many years—so many, that all the other years of my life seem but a dream. For my life has grown into this school, and has woven itself like ivy round its old buildings and familiar customs. It is a good school, partly a public and partly a private institution, uniting many of the advantages and disadvantages of both. The school is divided into six classes, one of which it is my duty to conduct through the mysteries of Latin, Greek, and English to the gates of the university. Once in every six years I part there from the companions of my march, and return hopefully to begin with a fresh band of awed urchins that journey through the valley of the shadow of learning, to which *musa*, *musæ* is the portal. Not altogether unprepared do these little ones tremblingly approach to join my caravan. Some childish rags cover the nakedness of their ignorance. They have mastered the spelling of *cat* and *dog*; they have toiled through and trustingly acquiesced in the scientific lessons of their Course of Reading;

they have learned and forgotten the long names of the mountains of Asia. So off we start, thus lightly burdened, on our long journey over the desert ; and soon the mules and asses begin to stumble and lag behind the quicker-paced dromedaries, while I, with shouts and entreaties, and sometimes with threats and prods, do my best to keep them together, and to guard them from the perils of the wilderness.

I may here explain, for the benefit of the aristocratic Mr. Jenkins, that my pupils are most genteelly connected. Not indeed the cream of society, such as is whipt at Eton, but sons of highly respectable lawyers, doctors, clergymen, officers, country gentlemen, and so forth, with but a very slight admixture of aspiring tradesmen's offspring. For the people of this city, that is, the lawyers, doctors, etc., thereof, are very exclusive, and bring up their children strictly in the ways of Mrs. Grundy. And have they not another great school, where the grocer's boy may have his vulgar little brain stuffed with learning by a separate, though not inferior, apparatus of grammars and dominies ?

These boys, whose lord and master I am for some hours every day, grow to be very dear and familiar to me. They seem like a part of myself, and when they leave me for business or for the care of some worthier dominie, I feel a pang at parting with them. For while some men perceive in a class of boys only

a restless row of heads, or a bespattered line of trousers and knickerbockers, I see little human hearts to be moulded for good or evil, and rejoice that such precious workmanship is committed to me—rejoice tremblingly lest I labour not well.

I love to watch them at their sports, to fancy myself one of them, to study their characters, to wonder what will be their future, what my influence on them will be, whether they will grow up good or evil, happy or miserable. Shall I introduce you, reader, to one or two of my favourites?

John White is one of the boys who will do my tuition most credit. Clever, diligent, and honourable, he is sure as a man to command respect and esteem. His disposition, as you may see by his face, is gentle and kind. In his character, though, there is a shade of what is half selfishness and half refinement, which leads him to shrink from the society of his companions, and makes me fear that he will not be a useful man. His father is a rich man, who will most likely send him to Oxford, where he is sure to become a fellow of some college; and if the Puseyite party be still extant there, I think—I don't know why—but I think he will join it. I never have to speak an angry word to him, but I am sorry to say the other boys don't like him. He is too quiet and reserved to sympathize with their noisy joys and sorrows.

Sauntering by White's side (and I wish both of

them would play a little more with the others), is Tommy Grey, his rival this year for the highest place in the class. Tommy is a good fellow, but he is being spoiled by too much learning. His mother is an awful woman, with spectacles and theories of education, who being deprived of opportunities of displaying her own talents, is resolved that she will shine in the reflected light of her son. So, though Tommy's intellect is not of the highest order, he is crammed to an extent perfectly alarming. Every day, as soon as that unfortunate youth returns from school, I have reason to believe that he is seized and imprisoned in a back parlour, where he not only is obliged to get up his school lessons to his mother's satisfaction, but has his flabby brain distended with a most useless mass of useful knowledge. None of the sweets of school-boy life are for poor Tommy. No exercise to strengthen these long skinny legs of his, and open that narrow chest. No thoughtless mirth to brighten up these dull eyes, that blink at me so sorrowfully and anxiously when I ask him a question. No excitement, except that of hiding from one of those bullies whose natural prey he is, and who fasten on him like vultures. Nothing but weary lessons, and his mother, who must be nearly as bad. She is truly an awful woman that Mrs. Grey, and I should not mind telling her so. Twice a week, on the days when the school is open to visits from the public,

does she come and sit in my class-room for two hours at a time, looking severely at the boys and critically at me. She waylays me when the class is over. She explains to me her theories of education. She is constantly propounding the original doctrine that knowledge is a good thing. She lectures Tommy on the evils of idleness, which the poor boy knows only by name. She amuses herself in holiday time by setting him exercises. I believe he is fond of her, and I daresay she loves him, and means all this for his benefit ; but I do think she is doing him a great deal of harm. She may succeed in making him a very learned and a very stupid man. It is more likely, however, that his health will break down under the process, and that his head will, by evident tokens, refuse to hold any more. I hope so, for Tommy is a good fellow, harmless as a dove, if not exactly as wise as a serpent or strong as a lion.

Charley Bernard is a different kind of boy. There he is, at the head of that band of boys who are furiously bent on driving that ball through the ranks of their no less eager opponents. His sturdy limbs, his good-natured face, his bright, ready eyes, and his lips clenched in earnest purpose to win the game, tell you at a glance why he is always chosen as the leader on his side. But in a few minutes he will be showing in the schoolroom the same qualities as distinguish him in the playground. You will see him with his

fingers run through his shaggy hair as if to collect his thoughts, and his eyes fixed alternately on his book and on my face. He is always awake and ready ; except when he does take a fit of naughtiness, when he starts off into the boldest and wildest kinds of schoolboy naughtiness, and does not allow himself to be yoked and harnessed into diligence again, till he has had a sound thrashing. It does one good to see him either playing or working, he is so earnest about whatever he does. I am sure Mr. Carlyle would have a high opinion of him. I can see that his companions have. And depend on it, if he lives, he will make a mark in the world, like every other man who sets himself to do with all his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do.

I wish Bernard could lend some of his strength of purpose to Harry Anderson. Such a light-hearted, thoughtless, idle fellow as Harry never was known, and yet everybody likes him, even I, grim old dominie as I am. My love for him has to manifest itself in a peculiar form. Nearly every day I have to call him from the foot of the class, and hurt his hand with an instrument kept for the purpose, and threaten him sternly with severer punishment. And every day, when this ceremony is over, he looks up into my face penitently and even gratefully, and seems to make a mute promise that he will learn his lessons for the future. And I have no doubt he really means it,

though next time they are no better learned, and the same performance has to be gone through *da capo*, till I begin to doubt whether Harry's school fees are not received by us under false pretences, inasmuch as an able-bodied porter who would contract for a certain quantity of flogging daily, would come cheaper and be just as efficient. He has got quite used to flogging ; it seems to agree with him. He takes it all as a matter of course ; and though his blue eyes sometimes fill with tears, he is laughing again next moment. I know a punishment, however, which has more terror for him, though I doubt if any terror would be sufficient to make Harry learn his lessons. It is to keep him in at the play-hour. Hitherto I have not done this often, because I have not the heart to bottle up so much happiness. But I must really steel my heart and knit my brows towards good-natured, thoughtless Master Harry, or he will grow up hopelessly ignorant and idle.

Another of my favourites who does not seem likely to do me much credit is Corsack. He is a colonial boy, and a half-caste. His father has sent him here for a year or two to be hall-marked with the stamp of an English education ; but he might as well have stayed at home. Poor fellow, he is very stupid. It is quite a sight to watch the patient resignation with which he allows himself to be taken down by boys not half his size, and then to see him sitting in state

at the bottom of his class, with such an edifying look of stolid gravity on his copper-coloured face that sometimes the whole class begin to titter. I am afraid they tease him ; but he is very good-natured, though at times he can get into a passion, and then it *is* a passion. He is of course sensitive about his colour ; but I gave the other boys a hint about this, and I hope nearly all of them have too much good taste to allude to it. But they couldn't help nick-naming him ' The Last of the Mohicans ;' and certainly his grave, stupid face reminds one a little of a Red Indian. Lately we were reading ' Othello,' and in order to avoid odious comparisons, I sent Corsack out of the room for a glass of water so often that my constant thirst became a general object of remark. He seldom can say his lessons ; but then he makes such tremendous efforts to do so, that one hasn't the heart to punish him. After all, Corsack, you are an honest fellow, and your father is a rich man. So you may sit peacefully at the foot of your class, and ruminate on the few scraps of knowledge which I can manage from time to time to supply you with. And in a year you will go home to your father's plantation, and in time, I hope, marry a wife who will have brains enough to make up for your deficiency. And I have no doubt you will pass through life peacefully and sleepily and harmlessly, your slow, dull mind neutralized by your honest, good-natured heart.

We have all read in the story-books of the frank merry boy who never tells a lie, gives away everything that belongs to him, sticks to his friends through thick and thin, almost likes to get punished, and has his liking frequently gratified. This character, more or less modified, is commoner among boys than the critical readers of these story-books suppose. Many dominies don't appreciate him at all, but I have always cherished such a sympathy with the joys and sorrows of boyhood, that he is rather a favourite of mine. I have him in my class just now; his name is Harold Douglas. A curly-haired, brown-faced, bright-eyed fellow he is, always laughing. When he gets a thrashing—which is often—he comes up laughing; and though for a moment after the infliction, he may look a little sobered as he clenches his hands inside his trouser-pockets to deaden the pain, as soon as he catches the eye of one of his cronies, his face breaks into a smile, and when I next look at him he is grinning more merrily than ever. He never looks grave except when he is asked a question, and then he stands up, and stretching out his arm like a pump-handle, with his eyes bent on the floor, gives himself up to profound reflection, the result of which generally is a sensible answer. He is diligent enough at his lessons, and would keep a good place in his class if he were not so constantly taken up by a friendly interest in other people's affairs. For, if he is ex-

amining Wilson's knife, or admiring the caricature which Harris is drawing of me, or telegraphing across the room to Campion a laughing condolence with him on the occasion of his being detected in some mischief, and forthwith rewarded with summary punishment,—it is not to be expected that he can always know what was the last sentence read, or the exact tense of *possum*, *potui*, *posse*, which we have just been going over. And thus Harold goes up and down in his class, and sometimes wins praise, and sometimes *palmies*. But it is always a pleasure to me to be his master, because I know that I will never have to punish him for meanness, cruelty, or deceit, and because his happy, healthy face, and his clear, boyish voice, are like sunshine and sweet music to my heart.

Then comes Billy Thompson, the last but not the least of my favourites. He is an ungainly, vulgar-looking boy, whom not many people would see anything loveable in ; but I love him because I know him, and because I have done him good. When he first came to my class he was idle and cowardly ; the other boys laughed at him as a muff, and I set him down as a hopeless case, judging hastily, as I fear I am prone to do. But I soon discovered the spring by which to move him. He had been brought up by stern, Puritan parents in the ways of their religion, and already, strange as it may seem to some, this slow, awkward boy—a boy in size and intellect,

though almost a man in years—had learned dimly and imperfectly to love God and goodness. And when I showed him how God wishes us to be brave and wise as well as pure and kind, he thanked me sincerely, and in his slow, stupid way, set about trying to master his lessons, and to conquer the timidity which made him shrink from the amusements of the other boys. It was a hard task, but not too hard for the motive which was urging him ; and so for the last year I have had the great joy of seeing him steadily overcoming his faults, acquiring industrious habits, winning more and more the respect and friendship of the best of his class-fellows. Strange, this stupid fellow is the only one of my boys who is so intimately my friend that we know and confess to each other that we are servants of one Master, soldiers in one battle. He has told me his troubles and difficulties and hopes, and I have told him mine. Could pupil and teacher be united by a closer bond ?

These are some of my favourite boys. I hope I never show partiality to them, but in my heart of hearts I know that I love some of my pupils more than others. And some I not only love, but respect. I can well understand the feeling which prompted a certain great and good dominie to say of one of his pupils, 'I could stand before that boy hat in hand.' I too have had boys to whom I could pay honour and reverence, knowing how much purer and kinder

they were, and how much wiser they would be than I am.

Yes, I often feel myself humble and base-minded in the light of the pure and generous thoughts of boyhood. I know that my Father has prepared for me a blessed home, through the gates of which I trust one day to enter into everlasting rest, and there to dwell by the river of the water of life, and beneath the shade of the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations of earth ; but I believe that many of those boys whom I have taught, and scolded and flogged, shall press in before me through these golden gates, and shall stand nearer the right hand of Him that sitteth on the throne, their garments shining eternally with the unspeakable glory of righteousness, and on their fair brows, in letters of living fire—

‘ BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.’



CHAPTER VI.

MY PARENTS.

'Where yet was ever found a mother
Who'd give her booby for another?'

GAY.



T grieves me to say that we dominies have not only the hard task of managing boys, or even young gentlemen—a harder task, but we have also our 'parents ;' too often hardest of all. This word is our generic name for that troublesome class, the legal guardians of our pupils, doubly troublesome to us, because the order is generally represented, so far as bodily presence in our class-rooms goes, by inquisitive and garrulous mammas, who, by an erratic dispensation of nature, have as much more time than the papas to keep a watchful and censorious eye over the education of their darlings, as they have less common sense and knowledge of the subject. And, if we can be despotic to our boys, we must be servile to our parents.

They are such a plague to us, that taking a strictly professional view of the subject, I am sometimes led seriously to think that boys would be much better without parents, after a certain age at least. It is a relief to me to say this in these pages. I dare not promulgate my views on the subject among my parents themselves, for my habits have altogether unfitted me to dig, and I should be ashamed to beg or to become a penny-a-liner. And I wouldn't for the world whisper such a thing to my boys, so great a respect have I for the tender bond of love that unites them to those that are nearest and dearest to them on earth. I know well what a strong and sacred bond that is ; I ought to know at least. My mother died when I was very young, and I remember her but as a doubtful dream, but my boyish steps were watched and guided by a father whom I used to and still love to believe, the best man that ever lived. I remember how sad were my partings from him, and how joyful our meetings. I remember how excited I would get when I expected him to come and see me at school, or when the blessed day on which the holidays were to begin was drawing near. How slow the time went on such occasions, and how little I cared for lessons and punishments ! I remember how, when I thought myself bullied by a stern and brutal dominie, I used to comfort myself by a day-dream, in which my father appeared to my rescue with loving wrath

flashing in his eyes, and, like a second St. George, vanquished and trampled on my oppressor. I am glad now to think that my father had too much sense to interfere with school-discipline, and that I had too much boyishness to grieve over my fancied injuries more than a few hours. I am glad now that he sent me away from home, but it used to seem so cruel. I do not despise these memories of my youth like some men. I cherish them as part of my stock-in-trade as a dominie, for they teach me to sympathize with the poor boys who have been turned out from all the ease and comforts of a warm, familiar fireside, and are left shivering on the *pons asinorum*, and trembling before *melas, melaina, melan*. I know of no greater trouble on earth than that of the timid boy sent for the first time to school. But not on account of the pain would I shrink from putting a boy through the ordeal. This life is not our home, but a great school, wherein there are many and hard lessons which must be learned, with tears and stripes measured out to us by a wise and just Teacher. For boy and man there is alike a journey to be travelled over, a bleak and hilly country abounding in dangers and difficulties; and well is it for him who in youth has known to endure the wind and snows, and to face the perils of the mountain path. Therefore, mothers, tear your sons from the loving bosoms in which they may not always nestle, and send them forth betimes into the

battle, fearingly and tearfully. The struggle will be bitter, but the bitterness will turn to sweetness after many days. And God is good who has made the young plant so hardy, that, transplanted to a strange and sterile soil, it may droop for a day, but soon begins to raise its head and to flourish anew, basking and glowing in whatever clime, drawing to itself the sunbeams of life through the dullest sky. Yes, youth is naturally happy ; and though at first we little exiled urchins may cry in quiet corners of the playground, and think mournfully of our darling mamma and the fleshpots of papa's kitchen, yet we soon brighten up, and come to look upon canes and bread and scrape as matters of course, and make up our minds to get all the enjoyment we can out of our new life. Anathema Maranatha be the dominie who makes that enjoyment less than cruel necessity compels !

But, speaking seriously, I believe that many, if not most, parents can't train their own children properly. Some have not time. We all have heard of Parliamentary orators, celebrated barristers, fashionable doctors, noted philanthropists and others, whose time is completely taken up by more important matters than the ruling of their own houses. I was told lately that a certain popular author, whose stories of home affection we have all read and admired, had taken a country house for two months, and proposed to retire thereto for the purpose of making the acquaint-

ance of his own children ! And even if all parents had time to train their families ; they have not all ability for it. *Dominie nascitur, non fit.* If few are equal to the hard task of ruling men, how many can perform the harder task of ruling boys ? And, granting the ability to rule, the weakness of human nature often prevents parents from being strictly just to their own boys. What says Horace ?

‘ Strabonem

Appellat *Petum* pater ; et *Pullum*, male parvus
Si cui filius est.’

How many parents have I not seen blind to the faults of bad children with whom they had been cursed ! How difficult to open their eyes ! And even when undeceived, the average parent of the present day seldom acts with due severity, either because he has not courage to do so, or because he is imbued with the new-fashioned ‘rule-of-love’ principles. It is certainly hard for a parent to punish his own child justly ; it is not given to every man to be a Brutus. Thus I have observed that dominies who have sons of their own among their other pupils either treat them with unconscious favour, or more likely take refuge from their natural instincts in over severity. I know I should not like to be the unlucky offspring of some dominies of my acquaintance, who are by no means Draconian in their rule over other boys.

But if parents are unable or unwilling to manage

their own children, they might do more to countenance and assist the dominie, upon whom the task falls. I suppose I shall seem hard to please if I say that some of our parents err by taking too little interest in the education of their sons, others by taking too much. There are some who send their sons to school with as little thought as they send their foals to grass, and, the thing once done, seem much more concerned for the welfare of the latter than the former. They know that the foal's market value depends on whether or not he is made sleek and stout and strong, but curiously enough they never seem to connect the school or the schoolmaster with their children's future weal or woe. If the faces are bright and the appetites good, it matters little to them that the minds are growing up crippled and stunted; nor will their eyes be opened to their mistake till Mammon and Mrs. Grundy step in and astonish them with the new code of laws which these august deities have of late years been promulgating, to the disgust of their votaries, who are thereby informed that without learning there shall be no more riches and honour, nor high places at their courts.

But just as likely the parents, represented by the mamma, take too much interest in our work. They keep a jealous eye over what we are teaching, which they of course know more about than we do. They haunt our class-rooms. They waste our time, seizing

us by figurative button-holes, in season and out of season, to discuss the precocity of darling Johnny or the backwardness of darling Bobby. They offer us suggestions—heaven save the mark! They object, before our faces and behind our backs, to our ‘method.’ They discover that Johnny and Bobby are not getting on fast enough, and remove them to the care of some other dominie, whom we heartily wish joy of them. They interfere with our discipline and question our infallibility. If Master Smith has told a downright falsehood, and I give him a due flogging therefor, the chances are that I have Mrs. Smith down on me next day. Her boy never told a lie; I must be mistaken; he must have been cruelly slandered; in fact, I have been acting like a brute and a tyrant. These doctrines find favour with the young gentleman himself, and, of course, my authority over him is to a great extent gone.

Some parents I know of might treat us with a little more civility. Too many highly respectable matrons in this part of the country look upon the family dominie in scarcely a higher light than the family grocer. I occasionally have to encounter a fine lady who makes inquiry as to the quality and quantity of the education I have to dispose of in the same complacent and condescending tone as she would examine the best black tea at four and sixpence, or the latest fashion in bonnets. I can’t particularize

the rudeness, but there is a something about their intercourse with the dominie which shows that they do not regard him as a being of like passions and manners as themselves. Ladies are generally adepts at showing or hiding this feeling, and I think they might hide it in their intercourse with us. I speak of some, not of all. Then there is another matter on which I should like to have a few words of expostulation with some of my parents. Occasionally they have to send us notes, excusing the absence of their sons, or to some such effect. These notes are not unfrequently such as they would not send to any other professional men. They are sometimes written on half sheets or other odd slips of paper. I think some ladies keep all the blank pages of their letters—if ladies' letters ever have blank pages—to write washing-bills and notes to dominies on. They don't always use the ordinary forms of address in our case, and very often don't even take the trouble to sign their communications. They write 'Mr.' So-and-so on the outside, not 'Esq.,' and thereby cause many weak-minded brethren of the craft to be offended. I have seen a dominie publicly tear up a note brought by one of his boys which did not give him his full style and title, but all men are not so courageous—nor so touchy. I intend to take a more dignified revenge on the authors of these notes. They are afraid of Mrs. Grundy, and would not write such

notes if they thought she would see them. But I warn all whom it may concern that in the tenth edition of this work I intend to print, for the information of that Argus-eyed divinity, a few of the communications which I daily receive from my parents, unless they turn over a new leaf and write in a more polite style. And the name of the lady who sent me a note upon a piece of her husband's shaving-paper shall be printed at the head of the list in large capitals.

Have I said enough to prove that our parents are a great plague to us? Two days in the week, for my sins, my class-room is open to their visits. How I nerve myself to go through the work of those days I scarcely know. It is a terrible ordeal. If Dante had been a dominie he might have added another circle to his Inferno. Tired out the other day by a lady whose time was of no value, and who thought that therefore mine must be equally worthless, I at length obtained five minutes' peace, and fell into a trance. I dreamed that, for striking a boy while in a passion, I had been conveyed to the lower regions, and in a quiet corner, from which I could see the stone of Sisyphus and the pool of Tantalus, had been given up to the tender mercies of a shadowy band of parents, 'making inquiries,' complaining, suggesting, chattering—a new and unutterable torture! But I awoke and found it was not a dream, for Mesdames Smith, Brown, and Robinson were all waiting to see

me, each indignantly clamorous to know why her darling was not at the head of the class. Truly a dominie's life has its sorrows as well as its joys !

It is good, however, to believe that our troubles are all for the best. I daresay these good, stupid ladies whom we dominies anathematize so much in unknown tongues, are appointed by a wise ordinance of Providence to perform the same salutary duty towards us as the consul's slave in the old Roman triumphs, sitting behind the desks whereon we are enthroned in the pride and pomp of our power, and ever whispering in our ears that we are but men !



CHAPTER VII.

‘LION.’

‘Ye who instruct the youth of various nations,
Of France and England, Portugal and Spain,
I pray you flog them upon all occasions,
It mends their morals—never mind the pain.’

BYRON.

BESIDES myself and my boys there is a very important member of our little society, without whose ever-ready help some of us would not get along very fast on the road to learning. He has qualities which make him much feared and respected, though, curiously enough, the most worthless boys in my class are often on the most familiar terms with him. In social conversation he is generally spoken of as *Lion*, but his official title is *the tawse*. By this the enlightened reader will discover that my dominieship lies within a certain portion of the British empire which is more than a hundred miles from Eton and Rugby.

But, for the benefit of those who have lived and learned in a land of canes and birch, I may describe the appearance of Lion, from which no one would guess him to be so formidable as his victims find him on experience. He is simply a strap of stout leather, divided at one end into strips, which are hardened at the points by a mysterious process, revealed to dominies on their entering the profession, under a solemn oath of secrecy, and practised by them in subterranean vaults, dimly lit by one kitchen candle. These strips are technically called tails, and when I remind readers that a certain cat, which would seem to have nine lives, so long has it survived the attacks of Radical reformers, also enjoys the dignity of as many tails, I will give them some hint as to the place which my Lion and his tails hold in the political economy of my little empire.

My boys take a great interest in Lion, so great that the first inquiry to which, on entering my class, they direct their youthful judgment, is as to whether he be 'buttery' or 'sappy.' I would be hard-hearted indeed to balk this innocent curiosity, so I soon give them cause to come to the latter conclusion, and thereafter they respect Lion exceedingly, and boast to their companions of his prowess as compared with the Lions of other dominies, and proudly relate their encounters with and escapes from him. They love who come off well in such encounters, and often,

dipping their hands in a tanpool or anointing them with mystic drugs, they invoke the goddess Diana, and strive to emulate the fortitude of the Spartan boys.

The method in which Lion acts upon the sensibilities of my boys is simple and effective. The doomed young gentleman who has broken our Medo-Persic laws stands forth and extends his little hand, sometimes doubtfully, sometimes defiantly. It is immediately and warmly embraced by the claws of our trusty monitor, and this operation is repeated a greater or less number of times, according to the heinousness of the offence which has been committed. The subject of the operation then returns to his seat, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and tries to look pleased, but generally doesn't. It is a point of honour, though, not to cry or flinch, and thus, if in no other way, Lion would do good to boys by preparing them to bear manfully the whips and scorns that time has hereafter in store for them.

There is nothing I like better than to see a boy trying to bear a flogging well. And I love, too, a sight which I sometimes see in our playground,—two sturdy little fellows thrashing away at each other with knotted straps, laughing at the pain, unwilling to give in first. Very vulgar and barbarian and brutal, no doubt, but much better for them than lounging about the streets or reading novels, which

seem to be the amusements of too many of the youth of the present day.

My Lion is still alive and vigorous, and will, I hope, remain so as long as I am numbered among dominies. But I observe signs that his race is fast dying out, a result of modern refinement much to be deplored. 'No corporal punishment' now figures among the prominent attractions of those wonderful establishments, where, as we see from the advertisement-sheet of the *Times*, young gentlemen are provided with board, education, washing, books, gentlemanly manners, and the comforts of a home, for twenty guineas per annum. And certain wise professors and learned ladies have lately been lecturing me and the other ignorant dominies, who believe in the wisdom of Solomon rather than that of social science sermonizers, severely rebuking us for our brutality, and pointing out that we are unfit to manage our classes if we ever have to resort to the rod. Some day there will be arising among us an equally enlightened set of philosophers, who will hold a Home Secretary unfit for his duties if any pick-pocket is sent to jail during his tenure of office! Oh ye philosophers! common sense is an element sadly wanting in some of your social sciences.

I am afraid, if weighed in these balances, I should be found considerably wanting. Yes, Professor Smith, and that solid and spectacled essayist, Miss Brown,

auctoribus, I am not fit to manage a class. Without Lion I should feel in a class of boys like a hunter turned out among a troop of grizzly bears without his trusty rifle and bowie. I can't rule them by the law of love. If they were angels or professors, I might ; but as they are only boys, I find it necessary to make them fear me first, and then take my chance of their love afterwards. By this plan I find that I generally get both ; by reversing the process I should in most cases get neither.

I hope, however, to manage boys without punishment when punishment is altogether abolished in the world—when children of a larger growth are no longer scourged, surely and sorely, by their own consciences and their own sins. I fear, though, that my views are becoming old-fashioned, and that the new race of dominies are adopting less sound systems for coaxing a child in the way he should go. For we are a humane and a merciful generation. Do we not pet and pamper our burglars and pickpockets, so as to make them admire our tender-heartedness, and disabuse their minds of the old fallacy that dishonesty is a very bad policy ? And if our Colonial Governor allow half of us to be murdered by black savages, and then save the other half by promptitude and severity, we praise him ; but if he carry his promptitude so far as to save nearly the whole of us, we prosecute him.

I lately read in the newspapers that a certain wise legislator, wiser than Solomon, while under examination by his constituents, by way of self-recommendation, gave utterance to the silly sentiment that he highly disapproved of flogging, and would never send his children to a school where it was allowed. So that we may soon expect a Royal Commission to inquire into the iniquities of the cane and the enormities of the birch, and a stringent Act of Parliament prohibiting corporal punishment in any form.

It is a wonder to me how these agitators, sane men in other respects, can be brought to talk such nonsense. Were they ever boys themselves, *real* boys? Surely not. I can fancy them sneaking about the playground in large woollen comforters, and running off to mamma with a doleful complaint about every little hurt; but I can't fancy that they were ever real boys. If they were, have they forgotten the memorable day in the beginning of their school life, when they rubbed the palms of their hands with rosin, and looked forward with delightful dread to that first caning which was to seal their undisputed title to the name of schoolboy? And do they now prate about this being 'degrading' and 'brutalizing'?

The question of to flog or not to flog may seem a small matter; but I am devoting so much space to it because I believe it to be a great one. The public mind is being gradually prejudiced with regard to it

by a certain class of loud talkers, and if we dominies, who are workers, be silent, we shall step by step yield our empire to the people who talk, and find ourselves hurried along by the current of theory which is sapping our oldest institutions. I for one will ever lift up my voice over the waste of waters, and protest, so long as I can find a single floating plank to cling to. I am a thorough Radical, indeed, in some educational questions; but in others I am a rank Conservative. Facts are as stubborn as theories are plastic. So, as theology, common sense, and experience alike teach me that boys will not do right without punishment, I punish them in spite of all theories to the contrary.

'But,' cry the chorus of pundit professors and socially scientific ladies, 'if you must punish, have you not some punishment less brutalizing than the lash?' (Observe how they give my homely Lion fine high-sounding names, 'corporal punishment,' 'the lash,' and so forth.) Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we have other punishments, more cruel and less effective. If a boy does not learn a hard lesson, I can give him a harder. If he is thoughtless and mischievous, I can shut him in from happy hours of play to scribble hastily and painfully, or learn by heart—sorely unwilling heart—the works of the immortal bards. But I think they like Lion better, and he does them more good. The pain of him is gone in a minute, but the fear remains. As for the disgrace, it

exists only in socially scientific imaginations. For this blessing is given to boyhood, that it is not ashamed to be punished and repent for its faults. A flogging seems to the unreasoning schoolboy mind a sort of repentance, so far a real one that it is not unfruitful ; certainly more so than much of that penitence which is performed weekly in our churches and chapels. I must take care ; I am getting into the regions of moral philosophy, which are mysterious and unfamiliar to me. But to elucidate my meaning I may here explain that in punishing, I act upon the assumption that my boys mean to do well. If they are well trained they will wish to please their parents and teachers ; and if they fail, it will be nearly always from thoughtlessness or weakness of purpose. Then Lion steps in as a stimulant, and all goes well—till the next time. They know they have done wrong, and take the consequences as a matter of course. Oh happy age ! when a boy's anger and a boy's sorrow pass away like clouds on a summer morning, leaving the sky purer and fairer than before.

At all events, I mean confidently to assert that my boys, though they may fear Lion, don't hate him. Behind his back they speak of him laughingly, and with playful irreverence travesty his performances in the nurseries of their wondering baby brothers. They consider him as an honourable and worthy enemy. They like him better than other punishments, because

he suits their disposition better. He is not always scolding and teasing, but what he has to say he says at once and has done with it, and his sayings are not easily forgotten.

I like Lion, too, for certain reasons. I like him because he saves me and all of us time and trouble and much unpleasant feeling. If I set a boy a hundred lines to write, he very likely is thinking what a horrid beast I am all the time he is writing them ; but if I give him a thrashing he looks upon me as a machine appointed for the purpose, and feels no more spite against me than against the slide on which he has fallen and bumped his little head. I can't explain this, but it is true. Even if there should be any bad blood between us, Lion brings it into the surface, and it quickly evaporates into space. He is a wholesome medicine. Then he is of great service in enabling me to regulate my punishments. Thoughts of a present cricket match or anticipations of a future pantomime may treble the annoyance of a written or learned imposition ; but by a deep study of the laws of force and motion, imparted to neophytes at the College of Preceptors, I am enabled on the spot to adapt Lion's rebukes to the magnitude of the fault, and the capacity of endurance of the culprit.

I value Lion also because his operations follow close upon detection, and are seen and manifest of all boys. Justice that comes with slow though sure

step, does not much intimidate boys, who cannot readily connect crime with punishment. If a boy hears that his friend Smith has so many lines to write, he will not so surely take example by Smith's sad fate, as if that delinquent be summarily and solemnly flogged before his companions in a way which leaves no doubt in their unreasoning minds of the power and vigilance of Nemesis. It is all very well for Smith to wink and smile and pretend he doesn't care, as soon as my eye is off him, but his companions know by experience that he does care, and unconsciously apply to themselves the adage, *feliciter is sapit, qui periculo alieno sapit*, as Mr. Disraeli and the Conservative Reformers have lately done with such singular sagacity.

Under most circumstances it is, of course, a disagreeable thing for me to have to call in Lion's aid. But sometimes it is a positive delight. How I have enjoyed making a cowardly bully or a selfish liar howl with rage and pain before his half-pleased, half-awed companions ! And it is not altogether unpleasant to see the grateful look which a plucky little chap sometimes gives you after he has bravely borne his flogging. It says as plainly as possible, what he would never express in words—'Thank you, sir ; I am sorry, and I won't do it again.' This will not happen unless you can get your boys to believe that you never punish them without cause. If, as too

many dominies do, you indulge in promiscuous striking from thoughtlessness or passion, they will not have such faith in your justice. To this end I try to rule myself—a harder task than to rule boys. There is a dark little room in our school which is to me a sacred spot. For there is a legend that one of my predecessors, a man of violent temper, used to shut himself up there when he got into a passion, and dared not trust himself among his boys till he had fought and conquered the devil who was tormenting him. I admire that good man, and try to imitate him. And I think I have so far succeeded, that my boys know that I punish them from calm deliberation and settled purpose. At least I try to do so always, though the flesh is weak. I have a great safeguard against unjust severity, however, in my sympathy with the culprits whom I must doom to stripes and tribulation. We have all heard of the pedagogue in the old story-books, who feelingly informs Master Badboy that he would rather bear the punishment himself than inflict it on him, and then commences operations *secundem artem*. I daresay Master Badboy was faithless, and so are many cynical dominies of the present day; but I believe in the sincerity of that wielder of the birch. I know, and I wonder if my pupils ever guess, that I often wish I could change places with the idle urchin who is looking fearfully into my frowning face, and nervously

twitching his fingers. I know very well what I am wishing for. I know what the temptation is that he has yielded to, and what the suspense is that he is suffering, and what the sting is that he will soon be biting his lips and nerving himself to bear. But for all that, I wish I were the naughty boy, and he the spectacled dominie. I should wish him joy of my authority, with its care and responsibilities, and I would take all the smart of his wrong-doings on myself, so that I might have his simplicity and light-heartedness.

My Lion seems to bear a charmed life. I have possessed, since I came to this school, many years ago, but one other instrument of the kind. That one's claws were too sharp, so at the prayer of afflicted mammas, I publicly sacrificed him on the altar of tender-heartedness, and cut him up into little pieces, which were carefully and reverently preserved by his victims, and may be preserved till this day, for all that I know. I then manufactured my present instrument, dubbing him Lion, and he has ever since led a long, useful, and, as I said, charmed life. From his responsible position, he has been exposed to peculiar dangers, but he has had miraculous escapes. Twice has he been stolen by very naughty boys bent upon his destruction. But each time their trembling hearts failed them, and their hands shrunk from the impious deed; and at this day he enjoys a hale and vigorous, though rusty, old age.

No wonder that I have such a respect for my trusty old servant. New-fashioned dominies may despise him, but I believe in him. I consider him to be a sound and simple system of theology, adapted to the comprehension of the boyish mind. I can't argue logically in the defence of my opinion. I know that the spirit of the age is said to be against me, and that spirit is hard to strive against. But there are some matters on which I hold the instinct of the child-world to be better than the logical theories of this hobble-de-hoy age, and that instinct seems to me to place a truer value on the merits of Lion, *et hoc genus omne*. So I hope that he will long continue to exercise a strictly limited and constitutional monarchy in our English schools. Nay more, if I had my way, I would sharpen his claws and send him forth to devour among bad men as well as naughty boys. I would flog and spare not garotters, pickpockets, fraudulent bankrupts, dishonest railway directors, adulterating grocers, and all other ruffians and swindlers. This is strong language to apply to respectable people, but mixing so much with boys, I have got into their bad habit of calling things by their right names.

I daresay that after perusing these opinions of mine, some tender-hearted people will set me down as a second Dr. Busby, and look upon me as a cruel monster. And if these prudent readers knew what school I teach in, they would be doubtless very skit-

tish of sending their sons there. But I know a brother dominie who writes earnestly against flogging, and flogs notwithstanding, as his boys have cause to know. In the same way, only *vice versa*, my precepts might be found not to correspond very accurately with my practice. For, there are some precepts which, if you act up to, you are spared the necessity of much disagreeable practice. Let the socially scientific philosophers ruminare over this axiom.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWO GREAT SORROWS OF THE DOMINIE.

‘The boy was taken from his mates and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.’

WORDSWORTH.



HE two great sorrows of all mankind are Death and Sin. Ever near, these awful shadows beset the path of each of us ; but no heart do they pierce oftener with their keen darts than that of the dominie.

I do not fear death on my own account. To me he is a friendly sorrow, a pain more pleasant than half the joys of life, for I have learned how to clothe his grim form in hope and peace, and to make him a companion and comforter rather than a foe. And I speak not of my own sins, though they are sorrow enough and more than enough to me, and to all whose eyes God has opened. But my heart yearns for my flock with a love which is not bargained for in the school

fees ; and when Death and Sin make ravage among the tender lambs, the true dominie feels his bitterest sorrows.

They seem so young and happy, these boys, that one cannot believe that death has any power over them. But God often rebukes us for our unbelief, sending His angel among them, at the touch of whose breath the bright warm lives wither and grow cold, and the happy smiles and the light of young eyes are gone in a moment, and for ever. And we are left looking up after them into Infinity with wonder and grief, pouring forth useless tears that Time alone can dry. Fathers and mothers know what the sorrow is. Think not the dominie has no share in it.

Many a lonely tear have I shed for children that were not mine. Even since I began to write these pages—you remember, reader, a happy and merry boy whom I spoke of in a former chapter. When I told you of his curly hair and his bright, laughing eyes, and his frank, unselfish heart, I little thought what a sad story I should have to tell of him now. He is lying in a new-made grave, and those who have the right to do so are wearing black for him.

He met with a severe accident while running home from school one afternoon. I should like to have been beside him as they lifted him up and carried him home, to have held his hand and comforted him in his pain, which he bore like a hero, only opening

his lips to whisper, 'Don't tell mamma.' She was lying on a sick-bed at the time.

But they could not hide it from her. They could not refuse to let her rise from her bed and hasten to his, though by this time fever had set in, and he did not recognise even that loving face.

His frame was strong and hardy, and Death and Life had a sore battle over him. But all along my trouble had no hope, and, strange to say, I felt almost relieved when I heard he was dead. It seemed natural for him to die, because I loved him—none knew how much !

I called several times while he was ill, and his father said, and I have no doubt spoke the truth, that he was obliged to me for my attention. They never asked me to see him—I could not have expected that—but every moment of the day that my duties left me free to dream, I saw the face tossing restlessly about on the pillow, and the brown eyes shining wildly—so wildly. His father had described it all to me, little knowing how every word sank into my heart.

I was asked, as a matter of courtesy, to the funeral, but, being a stranger to the family, I did not go. What right had I to intrude my grief amidst that which was more sacred ? But in the calm, sweet evening I stole down to the graveyard, and finding out the little mound of freshly-turned earth, bent over it and wept like a child. God, and none other, knew how I loved

him. But he is dead, dead, dead, and every day his little life and my great love grow to me more like a dream.

Yet such sorrow is not all tears. Slowly we try to believe, and God in His mercy helps our unbelief, that it is well with the little soul that dwells no more with us, but with his brother angels in heaven. Far more bitter and hopeless a sorrow is it to see the young heart poisoned by Sin, and thenceforth live in death.

I speak not of boyish faults and slips, in which there is often more of love and innocence than in older people's respectable virtues. But of sin, devilish, deadly sin, generated at the breath of Satan in the selfishness and foulness and vanity of a human heart.

We do not grieve to see the mischievous tricks and wayward humours of children. They at least believe in goodness, and do not rejoice in iniquity. If the little one stumble on the path, God has ordained that by watchful hands he may be raised up and kindly guided. But as age brings the corruption of manhood without its strength and wisdom, our boys too often lose the faith of childhood, and no human power can then hold their wilful steps.

In the life of every boy there is a time, a fearfully critical time, when his eyes begin to open to a wider knowledge of good and evil. Well for him if, strengthened by love and wisdom, he can choose the good and refuse the evil. Well if he take the right path,

and shun the broad way that to blind eyes seems strewn with flowers. If he pause or hesitate, the foe is on him, and his arm grows weaker to resist.

Not all at once do those over whom we mourn become base. Gradually, not altogether fearlessly, they grow to jest in curses, to talk coarsely and lightly of women and the sacred flame of love, to think it manly to be thoughtless and dissipated, and weak to be earnest and pure, till, in spite of the fair form and the smiling face, the young man is, to eyes that see truly, little better than a talking brute. Friends and parents may do their best to warn him and win him to the wisdom of the just, crying in his unwilling ears the truths we all know so well and believe so little ; but their labour is too often in vain. These ears listen more willingly to the words of one foolish companion than to the Heaven-sent precepts of all the sages. And thus our pupils encourage each other from sin to sin, while we their teachers must stand by, helpless and voiceless, and bear the agony of seeing innocence and purity slowly but surely done to death by our enemy the devil.

They do not mean to be wicked. They sin only from want of strength and knowledge, most likely. Seldom do we see a man, young or old, standing upright at the helm of his life, and steering steadfastly to the devil. They only lay down their oars and let themselves drift. But it is that drifting which is such

a sad sight to those who have known and seen whither the current carries these souls. They drift on and on till the light of the sun of youth dies away, and the soft breezes become cold and boisterous, and the waves rise ; and then, ah ! then how hard it is to believe that the Lord is walking on the face of the waters, and still stretching forth His hand to save and welcome.

I may seem to some to speak too gloomily of youthful indiscretion. They are not very sinful, all those sinners over whom I sorrow with fear. Custom, character, the not altogether forgotten teachings of parents, the fear of punishment, and the slender tie of 'gentlemanly' feeling, restrain many from the excesses of recklessness, and keep most within the bounds of respectability. I know this, but I know too how terribly hard it is to begin and to make an end of forgetting God. Not only the very wicked are to be wept for by those who love them, but all who are not in the highest sense of the word, *good*. If we are not serving God we are serving Satan, and we stand in deadly danger, however little work we may seem to have done for him.

It fills me with indignation to hear moralists talk with levity, or even with approbation, of young men 'sowing their wild oats.' Can we sow and expect no harvest ? And should we thus sow if the harvest is to be a dragon-brood of sins, which must either be fought with and conquered in long and sore battle, or

will surely devour our lives. Accursed be the doctrine that sin-bought experience favours the growth of virtue. 'He hazardeth sore,' said a certain wise man, 'that waxeth wise by experience. An unhappy master is he that is made cunning by many shipwrecks; a miserable merchant that is neither rich nor wise, but after some bankrupts.' And another sage dryly remarks: 'There are some who keep themselves from fire, and yet never are burned.' But indeed no man can touch such fire as Erasmus here means and not be burned.

No, no! Let other teachers teach as they will, and answer for their teaching to the Lord who has committed unto them many talents, but let us dominies be earnest and careful to teach our pupils in all places and in all times that it is no light thing to sin, that the youngest as well as the oldest must gird up his loins and set himself faithfully and bravely to serve God, who alone can guard us from the cunning foe that would rob us of our inheritance as the sons of heaven.

It is indeed a dangerous thing to sin, be it ever so lightly. We may be saved, but the chance is too terrible to be risked. Some indeed dip their feet in these dark waves, and by God's grace are able to draw back in time. Some, after many days, and with many struggles, reach the bank, and are safe. But too many will not or cannot escape from the fate they

have courted. And oh! how heartrending it is to see the face of one sinking at length, and taking his last despairing look at the green and pleasant bank that he so madly left, where now stand the friends who have warned him and striven to succour him—in vain; too late.

At such sad sights angels weep; and so may dominies. But few know, and fewer believe, how many and bitter are the tears of some of us. Parents think that our affection and care for our pupils is a mere matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. Are they always wrong?



CHAPTER IX.

DIFFICULTIES AND VEXATIONS OF THE DOMINIE.

'Est animus tibi, sunt mores, est lingua fidesque,
Sed quadringentis sex septem millia desint,
Plebs eris.'—HORACE.



ESIDES our greater sorrows, to some extent common to all men, we dominies, like all men, meet with peculiar difficulties and stumbling-blocks on our professional path.

Perhaps the chief of these is the grievance to which I think I have already alluded, about our social position. Being great men in our schoolrooms, we naturally do not relish being little men out of them. We are offended that the parents of our pupils do not always treat us as their equals, or even superiors, as in most cases we feel ourselves to be. Believing our profession to be a noble and a sacred one, we object to being ranked below the men who speak platitudes in

the holy name of religion, and those who hire themselves out at so many guineas a brief to speak truth or lies in the scarcely less holy name of justice. We are offended because vulgar parents do not always address us as 'Esquire.' We demand that a Reform Bill on the lateral principle be introduced into the social constitution of our nation, amending it after the model of that of Athens, where the best and bravest and most honoured men of the estate were not ashamed to become dominies, and were honoured all the more by their countrymen because they could teach as well as fight and harangue.

Some will deny that there is any necessity for such a reform. They will instance in proof that they have even asked the family dominie to dinner. But did they ask his wife? And do their consciences not tell them that they invited him and received him with much the same feelings as Sir John Bull invites his tenantry to dinner on rent-day; or Lady Albion sends a card for her conversazione to Mr. Plebeian Genius, who is so clever, and has written such an amusing book? They do generally look upon us in the same light, unless we happen to be clergymen, as many of us are; and then, since religion has become more fashionable than it was in the days of the apostles, a white tie is found to be an *Open Sesame* to the portals of every kind of society. And some of them, too, make an exception in favour of rich and

prosperous dominies, who may be at the head of large or well-known schools; while they look down with great contempt on the tribe of tutors and assistant masters. This is my aunt Tabitha's view of the subject. My worthy aunt is more noted for dignity and affection than for acuteness of mental power; and when I first became a teacher, she remonstrated with me upon compromising the family name, and reminded me that God had made me a gentleman, and would expect me to lay out my talents in a more genteel way. 'If you were at the head of a good school, it would be a different matter,' she admitted; 'but an assistant master!' I vainly endeavoured to persuade my good aunt of the truth of the heathen sentiment *Vires acquirit eundo*, and pointed out to her, that though, if the Prince of Wales thought fit to be an honorary teacher of boys as well as an honorary slaughterer of men, he would doubtless at once obtain the chief post in a celebrated and well-endowed school, still I, not being such a great personage, could not expect to be so lucky, but must win my way to command by serving in the inferior grades of the profession. But my aunt Tabitha was inexorable and unreasonable; and there are many people who are no wiser than she on this matter, and consider a teacher, however learned and well-bred, as a being far lower in the scale of life than the drawling, conceited puppy into whose thick head he has crammed with

great difficulty as much knowledge as has enabled him to squeeze through an army examination.

But in spite of what I have just said, and what I have said before, I am not very bitter over this grievance of our social position. I complain because my profession complains, but personally I have no great sympathy with those thin-skinned dominies who invoke Mrs. Grundy with alternate upbraidings and entreaties, demanding and beseeching of her to make them gentlemen, in the most select sense of the word. I have no very good-will towards this divinity of the genteel world, and object to recognising the principle that she can issue letters-patent to this effect. The fact is, that among dominies, as among men of all other professions, there are some who never could be made gentlemen by any ordinance of Mrs. Grundy, and some who never could be, or could be thought to be, except by fools and vulgar persons, anything else. I think, then, that we dominies should not concern ourselves about waiting upon Mrs. Grundy, both because, like the shepherd in Virgil and Dr. Johnson, we may find her at length to be a native of the rocks, and because, knowing our calling to be a good and a godly one, we can afford to do without the countenance of all earthly and diabolical divinities. And, oh! my brother dominies, you have yet to learn an elementary lesson in the nature of human joys and sorrows, if you do not know how sweet and

pleasant a thing it is to feel one's-self ill-used and injured, to nurse and cuddle in our hearts a darling grievance, to be despised and to despise a hundred-fold in return ; to mount an invisible height of moral grandeur, and thence survey, with complacent pity, the crass and unappreciative mass of mankind ! For practical and poetical illustrations of which sentiment, see Byron and other writers of the discontentedly spasmodic school.

While I am on this topic, I wish to say a word upon a notable scheme which certain philosophers have propounded for improving the social position of our profession. To this end all dominies are to band themselves together into a sort of union, and to stamp themselves with a hall-mark of their own approbation, which by a law, luckily not yet obtained, it will be penal to counterfeit. If I understand the scheme rightly, all present dominies of influence are to be bribed into consent by being stamped gratis, while all young dominies of the present and unfledged dominies of the future are to earn this stamp by undergoing an examination into their acquirements. I doubt much if this plan will exalt us more highly in the public esteem ; but I doubt more if it will fulfil the other end of its advocates, in shutting for the future the gates of the profession against all but good and fit men.

I never knew a dominie who had been a bankrupt

tradesman ; but novelists and popular rumour declare our profession to be largely composed of such men, and I am willing to admit that the thing is possible and lamentable. But I deny that we could get good dominies by examination. Such examinations are generally tests of nothing but cramming. And the skill of a good dominie is just such as cannot be crammed into or questioned out of a man. I can quite understand that any one ought to be examined as to his knowledge of anatomy before he be allowed to tamper with the human body, but I do not believe that any examination, oral or written, can show whether he be fit or unfit to deal with the minds of boys. You may examine a man as to his knowledge of the force of *κατα* in composition, but you cannot by examining him find out whether he is firm and kind and vigilant and persevering, and still less whether he has the power of imparting his knowledge of *κατα* and other subjects to unwilling and unretentive little minds that don't want to know anything about *κατα*. To know and to teach are different matters ; and unfortunately those who have the most knowledge are too often the least able to impart it. For if a man does his best to dry himself up into a Latin and Greek mummy, he cannot be expected to have preserved among his vast stores of irregular perfects and aorists any very vivid remembrance of how he felt and thought and loved and hated as a boy ; and this

is just the sort of knowledge which above all others a dominie ought to have. The fact is that a man who knows nothing of Latin but *musa*, *musæ*, and in whose mind are still fresh his difficulties in getting to know it, will, *ceteris paribus*, be better able to teach *musa* to boys, than a man who has all the beauties of the language at his finger-ends, and most likely will not so well understand how to set his pupils on the long road, the early steep and rocky places of which he has forgotten, or perhaps scarcely ever known. So I would not prohibit a man who knows nothing but *musa* teaching that, always provided that he does not presume to teach *dominus*, which he does not know. If he is a clever teacher, he can easily learn and be able to teach *dominus* too, if necessary ; and if he is a conscientious teacher he will not try to teach *dominus* unless he has learned it. Now, you can by examination make sure of learned, or at least of crammed teachers, but not of clever or conscientious teachers.

But the age of universal competitive examination is coming upon us,—a golden age indeed for dominies, if they have not to submit to examination themselves. I don't despair of seeing the day when no poet shall be allowed to print verses (what human power could restrain him from writing them !) till he has shown a competent knowledge of quadratic equations, and no street-porter shall be suffered to carry for us the

slightest burden unless he has proved himself a proficient in the art of making Greek hexameters.

I think a much more legitimate object of such a union, as of other trades-unions, would be the increasing of the salaries of dominies. Here again I must be understood as grumbling not on my own account, but on behalf of my brethren. For myself, although Messrs. Goldleaf know the average amount of my balance at their bank, and do not treat me with any very profound deference in consideration thereof, I may say that I am one of the richest men I know, for I have always more money than I want. But I can sympathize with the difficulties of a dominie who has been brought up as a gentleman, and has a family to bring up in the same way upon the salary which he receives for doing much harder and nobler and more useful work than half of the rich people whose sons he is educating. There are indeed prizes in the profession ; fat headmasterships, with fair prospects of deaneries and bishoprics, open to such of us as are clergymen ; but most of us are wofully ill paid. A tutor in a gentleman's family too often receives the wages of a butler without his perquisites. And after many years of hard study and labour, when he has fought his way to a mastership in some good school, he still finds that he is not half so well off as a fashionable tailor. And yet you will hear parents moaning over the expense of education, while the fact

is that the education of their children costs them less than their clothes. This is but natural in days when the outside is looked at more than the inside by the pharisaical disciples of Mrs. Grundy. But if we were to return to the simplicity of the corduroys of my boyish days, and were to increase the salaries of dominies with the price of the foppish apparel in which our modern youth delights to array itself, I venture to say that it would be better both for the dominies and for the next generation.

This is the real cause of the low estimation in which dominies are held. We are apt to value a thing not by the cost of its production so much as by the price we pay for it. If people were to pay their dominies better I am certain they would think more highly of them.

I have mentioned already the annoyance which the parents of our pupils give us by their interference in the way of suggestion and remonstrance. This annoyance takes its worst form when a promising boy is removed from our care to that of another dominie, because he is supposed 'not to be getting on.' We are all bigoted believers in ourselves, and have no faith in the systems of others; so it is natural in us to feel some real concern, apart from pecuniary considerations, for a boy who is thus deprived of the enormous advantage of our teaching, and given over, to be ruined, as we think, by an inferior workman. So

this is one of the chief annoyances of a dominie, and in the present state of things, I fear we must just bear it with as little complaint as possible. I suppose parents must have some interest in the education of their children, and must be allowed to take whatever steps seem best to them to secure their being brought up to be wise men ; only one can't help wishing sometimes that the parents were a little wiser themselves. Of course, Master Bobby Somebody's mamma and papa have a right to take him away from my class and send him to Mr. So-and-so's ; but as I think I am getting Master Bobby's young ideas to shoot in a most satisfactory way, and as I consider Mr. So-and-so an ignorant and conceited puppy, and remember the day when he was himself a pupil of mine, and that for years he blundered at the vocative of *dominus*, I can't help feeling annoyed by the change. Philosophers would tell me that the annoyance comes from wounded vanity ; and perhaps they are not altogether wrong, but it is an annoyance for all that.

Perhaps I ought not to mention this as one of the peculiar troubles of a dominie, for I suppose a physician has the same feelings when a good nervous patient deserts him for another practitioner of novel and therefore dangerous ideas ; and a clergyman, when a family who have 'sat under' him for years, transfer their spiritual allegiance to a place of wor-

ship where the gospel is preached more strongly, or purely, or broadly, or milk-and-watery, as the case may be. But I now come to a great and special vexation to which we, of all learned professions, are chiefly exposed—being called nicknames. Our boys, from thoughtlessness oftener than from ill-feeling, give us *soubriquets* which sometimes stick to us all our lives, not much to our satisfaction, inasmuch as they are generally uncomplimentary to our personal appearance and manners. Of however philosophical a disposition he may be, it is not very pleasant for an old and honourable schoolmaster to know that he is talked of among two generations of boys and men by some such appellation as ‘Old Clo,’ or ‘Grumphy.’ We soon learn what our nickname is, if we have one, and then we live in constant dread of it, and never see our boys whispering laughingly together without suspicion. We are taunted with it in anonymous letters and valentines, which we often receive about the middle of the month of February, and sometimes in audible words on the streets by bold and rude boys, who of course are not *our* pupils, but perhaps once were, or perhaps know us only by fame. The other morning, while I was at breakfast, I was shocked at the spectacle of a highly respectable dominie, who, with irate countenance, was rushing along the street in hot haste after a naughty boy who had ventured to cry ‘Goggles’ as he was passing. My professional

sympathies were of course with the pursuer, and I was glad to see the rash youth caught and soundly belaboured in an effectual way which only dominies understand.

These nicknames are very varied in kind, and say much for the versatility of boyish wit. Sometimes they are opprobrious epithets derived from the unlucky name it may be a master's fate to bear. Thus a dominie called Cowan will likely be unofficially known to his pupils as 'Cow;' while a French master of the name of Piquier would run a great risk of being familiarly denominated 'Piggy.' Sometimes there is a most profound philological secret in these names. I once knew a master whom all his pupils called 'Rootey,' none of them knowing why, though some were inclined to attribute it to his voice resembling that of the principal actor in a certain celebrated domestic drama. I set myself to the study of this problem, and succeeded in tracing the derivation of the word. The master's initials were L. S. D., and some bright, boyish genius, stimulated probably by a recent caning, having suggested that these letters represented the *root* of all evil, this somewhat cumbersome nickname was given him, and speedily corrupted, by a sweeping process of phonetic decay, into the familiar word whose origin was lost in mystery to the boys of the next school generation.

A dominie's nickname is often simply his Christian

name irreverently contracted or adorned with an epithet. Thus 'Bobby,' or 'Old Jack,' are nicknames of the least offensive class. But boys are not at all particular about the real names in this case, and if they think a master has not received a sufficiently attractive appellation at his baptism, will not hesitate to change it, and even to forget the distinction of sex. I have known two dominies, who were always called Peter, though they did not sign themselves so; and one who was known as Molly, from a romantic attachment he was said to cherish for a fabulous female of that name.

But perhaps the majority of nicknames are derived from personal peculiarities of their owners. The origin of such names as 'Waxy,' 'Snuffy,' 'Snarl-yow,' 'Puggy,' must be evident to every reflective mind. And though perhaps the bearers of these names have at one time given cause for them, still it is hard that no repentance or amendment on their part can wipe out the stigma which a flash of naughty young wit has cast upon them.

I know a very worthy and learned man who was once a dominie, but has since risen on ecclesiastical stepping-stones to higher things, and he has told me, with quiet and complacent glee, that he was the only schoolmaster he ever knew who had not a nickname. In some things it is not well to be wise. He did not know, and I did not tell him, that he *had* a nickname,

by which he is known to this day among those who do not reverence his grizzled locks and kindly wisdom. Happy ignorance!

If our boys sometimes take a pleasure in tormenting us, they little know how difficult and vexatious it often is for us to torment them, as I suppose they think we take a pleasure in doing. They little know how hard it sometimes is to frown and punish. They little know how often we cloud our own happiness in pronouncing sentence of boyish misery against them. They little think, when we are doing a certain disagreeable part of our duty, that the smart sometimes lingers longer and sorer in our hearts than on their skins. I am sure I have reproached myself for thrashing a boy hours after the tears have dried from his eyes and he has forgotten all about it in a hearty romp. And sometimes the pleasure of many of my afternoon walks has been spoiled by thoughts of the merry urchin whom I have left locked up in school to write out or learn some dreary task. Nay, I have lain awake half the night, thinking of the punishment which it would be my duty to inflict next morning. We can't expect our boys to believe this, I suppose, but surely older and wiser people ought to grant that nature has not given us less kindly hearts than other men, and to appreciate the difficulty which we find in being cruel that we may be kind.

It would be tedious to go over all the numerous worries and vexations which a dominie has to endure in the management of a large class of boys. Sometimes half your class will come to school without having learned an important lesson. Sometimes Master Charley, by whose open countenance and frank blue eyes you thought you could have sworn, will be detected telling you a downright lie. Sometimes again you will find that you have punished Master Johnny unjustly. These things are sore troubles to the good dominie, and many others which a dominie will understand, though I could not expect lay readers to do so.

I may say then, that though a dominie's life has many and great joys, it has also constant worries, which weigh sorely upon such of us as have weak digestion, and therefore get easily into low spirits. If, however, you are one of the lucky men who have—alas! how few have!—*mens sana in corpore sano*, a sound stomach and a sunny temper, you may despise these petty vexations, and console yourself by thinking how wise and powerful and useful you are, and how much more so many other people are, and how all parents are not stupid nor all pupils naughty. The smaller joys and sorrows of a dominie's life are very much as you take them. It might have been of a dominie that Horace wrote—

‘ Dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum ;
Præcipue sanus, *nisi cum pituita molesta est.*’

But even if the bile be troublesome, you may have, not pleasure, but a happiness and satisfaction which is better than pleasure, in knowing that bravely, diligently, and painfully, you are doing a good thing in the service of God, bearing a share in the holy duty of making His world more like Himself. To this end may He give all dominies strength to labour and suffer ere the night cometh when no man can longer work or weep !



CHAPTER X.

DANGERS OF THE DOMINIE.

'He treads a dangerous path that beareth rule ;
Who standeth in the forefront of the fight,
The darts fly thicker round.'—*Old Play.*



FEAR I am a careless writer. A literary dominie is very apt to want precision and arrangement, inasmuch as these qualities are not much called into exercise in teaching boys, who require to have a piece of knowledge drummed into them by constant repetition. However, I do not wish to insult my readers by instructing them in this manner, and if I am going to repeat to them in this chapter some things which I have told them already, my excuse must be that they deserve to be repeated.

The fact is, that within four-and-twenty hours after writing the last line of my chapter on the difficulties and vexations of a dominie, I read, with much interest,

and not a little self-reproach, a book, by a Transatlantic authoress, called *Little Foxes*. The title of this book shows its object, which is to point out that there are some hurtful and insidious sins, into which respectable people who go to church regularly and abhor all flagrant wickedness, are in great danger of falling. This reminded me that I ought to devote a chapter to certain great dangers to which dominies are peculiarly exposed, but which I have as yet only hinted at.

The first and chief of these is vanity. We are all in danger of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but dominies especially so. Consider how much power we wield for so many hours a day, with what respect we are addressed, with what deference we are listened to. When I come down to my class-room in the morning I find half a dozen boys hanging about the door, waiting for a word and a smile, and eager to do the slightest service for me. When I begin to teach, half a dozen of them will almost fight to have the honour of lending me a book. I fancy that most of us receive the like flattery, if we are not exceedingly grim and grumpy. How hard then is it for us not to consider ourselves Sir Oracle, and to expect that men will defer to our wisdom as well as boys ! Therefore is it, as I have said, that we are an unsocial and unfriendly profession, for in proportion as we think highly of ourselves so we think

lowly of one another. Half a dozen dominies in company, trying to snub one another, would be as interesting and instructive a sight as half a dozen kings of Dahomey shut up in a cage. There is indeed great danger of our failing in that humility which does not rank very high among the virtues blessed by the approval of Mrs. Grundy, but which is very necessary for the right service of God.

There is danger too of our not only being dictatorial but cruel and cross. Remember that we are judge, jury, prosecutor, and executioner in our single persons. How difficult will it be then for us to keep the milk of human kindness from souring in our hearts. The habit of fault-finding is dangerous to any man's sweetness of temper and peace of mind, and it is a great part of our professional duty to find out and correct faults. Daily and hourly we are not only tempted but compelled to rebuke, and scold, and punish; and we should be more than mortal if we always exercised our functions with love and wisdom.

There are some lucky dominies whose temper and health are always sound, and who, therefore, are never snappish, or impatient, or sarcastic. If they ever get angry it blows off in a minute. They can laugh good-naturedly at everything, and sweeten even their punishments with a joke. But we are not all so fortunate. Some of us, alas! have stomachs and nerves

like other men, and work more wearing to these than that of other men, and therefore we are even more prone than other men to get into unhappy irritable states of mind and body. You know what I mean, dyspeptic reader. You know how cranky and jarringly the world sometimes seems to you to go. You can sympathize with me in the gloomy moments when I feel inclined to desert my post here, and fly from this murky, foggy, hateful country, to the dim shores of Italy, to seek rest and peace in the cool olive-groves that fringe the glorious Mediterranean and lie at the foot of the snow-clad Alps. My banker's book, if not my conscience, forbids me, but I often long to betake myself to that blessed land, and there to bathe my wearied mind in a Lethe of light and beauty, and forget that there are boys on the earth and that I ever was a schoolmaster.

Such unhappy and discontented thoughts come generally from over-indulgence in meat or drink, or work or excitement. And if such over-indulgence be wrong in all men, much more is it so in dominies. For our sins in this respect will be visited on our boys. If, while we are in this state of mind, we find that Master Thickskull is hard to be convinced of the truth that an adjective agrees with its substantive, we will be too apt to snap and snarl at poor Master Thickskull, venting upon him the vials of wrath which are more justly due to our own indiscretion.

It is a mistake to hold that the dominie should be a man of a very mild temper. I would rather he had a hot-spirited temper, provided he can command and regulate it. But it is bad for a dominie to have an irritable temper, which makes him cross and severe to little faults of thoughtlessness and carelessness. How many even of the best and wisest of schoolmasters must feel guilty as they read these words of the little book which I have mentioned at the beginning of this chapter! 'We have been on our knees, confessing humbly that we are as awkward in heavenly things, as unfit for the Heavenly Jerusalem, as Biddy and Mike, and the little beggar-girl on our door-steps are for our parlours. We have deplored our errors daily, hourly, and confessed "that the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable," and then we draw near in the Sacrament to that Incarnate Divinity whose infinite love covers all our imperfections with the mantle of His perfections. But when we return, do we take our servants and children by the throat because they are as untrained and awkward and careless in earthly things as we have been in heavenly? Does no remembrance of Christ's infinite patience temper our impatience, when we have spoken seventy times seven, and our words have been disregarded?'

It is indeed well for dominies and for all men to be angry with the thief and the liar and the bully. But

it is not well that we should be cross and sharp with little boys who are not so perfect and wise as we are. They take it all in faith, as a matter of course, perhaps consoling themselves by thinking that when they get whiskers and tail-coats, they too will be able to scold and bully those who may be set under them. This is what they learn from our needless anger. Ah! better for these little ones that they never in their lives made an adjective agree with its substantive than that they learned that lesson.

Let us then, my brother dominies, strive bravely and perseveringly against this our besetting sin. Let us wrestle with the devil, in this matter a more homely conflict than some may imagine. For it is well known that, considering it necessary to keep pace with the spirit of the age, the infernal potentate has studied physiology, and I believe it to be true that he most surely and sorely assails our tempers through our stomachs. So if we would be kind and patient to our pupils, we must avoid the familiar temptations of the flesh, by which being bound, so many well-meaning but dyspeptic people are for a time delivered over to the power of Satan.

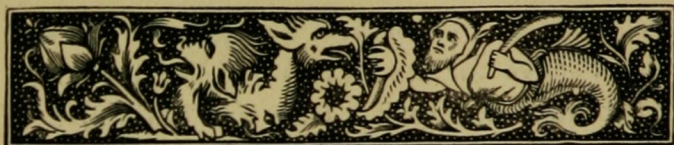
Above all, let us avoid drinking. This is one of the greatest dangers to which a dominie is exposed. We get into low spirits, and cannot bravely face the wear and tear of our work, and then comes the craving for some stimulant, something which for a moment

may give us strength and vivacity, or may drown our gloomy thoughts in a false joy that gives place too soon to a darker and more hopeless melancholy. But the temptation is indeed powerful, and thus have many of us foundered on this rock, who began their career with a fair breeze and a smiling sky. Therefore, though when I am ill I take wine or castor-oil, or whatever will be good for me, when I am well I no more touch strong-drink than I do castor-oil. God has given us stimulants from which there is no reaction,—light, air, and water; and these I freely make use of. But as for wine and spirits, I am a Rechabite; and I would have all healthy men, and especially all boys, to do likewise. Is it not sad to see even children fed with poison by foolishly indulgent parents? But I say no more on this subject, lest this work be mistaken for the prize tale of a temperance society.

The sum, then, of my chapter is, that we have all peculiar dangers which make the gate of heaven to us as it were the eye of a needle, and that as it is hard for a rich man not to love riches, so it is hard for a dominie not to be proud and self-willed and harsh and unjust. Let us not conceal it, my brother dominies, least of all from ourselves. Let us learn the great lesson of wisdom,—to know ourselves, and do the great deed of virtue, to amend ourselves. And let us not be discouraged by the failure which

must ever meet our bravest struggles to be better, but let us strive for the measure of success which is denied to none who seek it truly and faithfully. The flesh indeed may be weak, but let the spirit be willing. For one hour only we must watch and pray ; and thereafter the Lord giveth His beloved sleep.

Yes, it is the lesson of Gethsemane that every dominie should diligently learn from the great Teacher. To watch and pray is our armour against all the dangers of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which armour, if we use aright, pride and anger and intemperance will have little power to wound us.



CHAPTER XI.

THE WORK OF THE DOMINIE.

‘ His heaven commences ere the world be past.’

GOLDSMITH.



AM afraid that the chapters immediately preceding this do not represent my profession in the favourable light in which I wish to put it. I have made the life of dominies to appear very unenviable. We would seem to be indeed unhappy men, social Ishmaelites, with every hand against us, snubbed and vexed by parents, worried by pupils. But it would be far from my purpose if these dark colours are to be taken for a fair painting of the life of a dominie. I have dwelt upon the shadows, not because there is no sunshine, but, I suppose, because it is always easier to grumble than to rejoice. And by way of antidote to the last few chapters, I devote this to the special and unqualified laudation of the work of the dominie.

It is a most important work, for the character of the next generation will to a great extent depend upon the dominies of this. And it is a work far from being so commonplace and ignoble as some people think ; on the contrary, it is one which calls into exercise every nerve and sinew of mental power, and requires the use of the peculiar talents of nearly every other honourable profession.

The profession of preaching in a white necktie may be more highly esteemed than ours, but we too, as I have already said, are daily called upon to preach and exhort, to stimulate virtue and to reprove sin. Our discourses must, for the most part, be extemporaneous, and our divinity must be sound, or we will work greater harm, I venture to say, with the leave of the *Record*, than all the latitudinarian Essayists and ritualistic Bishops. Only, we have this enormous advantage over our brethren of the pews and pulpit, that we need not waste our energies in the study and exposition of controversial theology. We have the tortures and imprisonments of an inquisition to enforce our dogmas and crush scepticism. Woe to the presumptuous youth who dared say that the earth moved round the sun if I choose to affirm that it didn't. I would soon make an *auto-da-fe* of him !

Then we must be practical statesmen. We must be able to organize and legislate. We must make constitutions for our little empires, and laws which

will not only protect the weak against the strong, but will regulate and encourage labour, and punish idleness, thus solving the highest problems of political economy. Though again it must be borne in mind, that we are not troubled by factious opposition to our measures. With Lion as my standing army, I should like to see any young Radical attempting to limit my prerogative.

And the mention of Lion reminds me that we must have many of the distinctive qualities of soldiers and lawyers. We must be able to drill and discipline our Lilliputian armies, to give the word of command with decision and promptitude, to say 'Go' to a boy in such a manner that he goeth without further question. If we rise to a generalship in the profession, we will require skill and knowledge to handle our columns, and to know the enemy's strength and resources. We must take care that our officers obey our orders, that our divisions move to the attack in due regularity, that the enemy's works be not assailed before his outposts are carried, that too strong a force be not sent out against the Greek aorists, nor too weak a one against the *pons asinorum*, that raw soldiers be not too recklessly exposed to a fire of irregular verbs, nor old veterans cooped up too long in *propria quæ maribus*. There are many celebrated schools in England which have suffered, and are suffering, because their commanders are ignorant of the true principles

of scholastic strategy, and carry on their war against ignorance according to old-fashioned rules which have been exploded by the prowess of young Napoleons of the rod, and the invention of new fire-arms destined to supersede the old Brown Besses of their own school-days.

We must be lawyers, too, and possess the judicial faculty in a high degree. We are daily called upon to preside at criminal trials in which we conduct the prosecution, agree upon the verdict, and pronounce the sentence. And this we have to do upon evidence which can never be quite relied upon, and often upon no evidence at all, for, except in very heinous cases, the right-minded dominie will encourage his boys not to allow themselves to be subpoenaed against one another, and will above all discountenance the practice of laying informations. Our consciences would be like flint if we could use this tremendous power hastily or unjustly, and not feel remorse. Some dominies there are, I grieve to say, who are not fit to sit in judgment, since they hold every *suspect* guilty, unless he can prove his innocence, after the manner of French courts of law. I have known a school-master flog a boy into falsely accusing himself of theft, upon mere suspicion, and when the truth was discovered, severely blame the innocent offender for deceiving him. Doubtless, the boy forgot all about it very soon, but let us hope that the dominie's sleep

was restless for many nights after. It is a good rule for us to cherish a reluctance to condemn, and to uphold the good old maxim that an accused person is innocent till he be proved guilty. But to know proof from suspicion is sometimes hard.

Your dominie should be also somewhat of a doctor, at least if he keeps boarders. Boys are troubled with a variety of strange diseases, and it will be well for the dominie to know when to call in the real doctor, and when to administer tar-and-water on his own responsibility. This is an excellent medicine ; I have had some experience in its use, and I should like to doctor with it some young Oxford and Cambridge gentlemen who are so often *æger*. Besides this sovereign remedy and disinfectant, he, or his wife, should know when and how to apply a limited pharmacopœia, that by the timely exhibition of gruel or senna-tea in Master Smith's case, he may spare that young gentleman's parents the necessity of rendering tribute to the physician and apothecary. And I need not point out that the nature of a certain branch of the dominie's duties renders necessary for him an empirical knowledge of the elements of anatomy and the structure of the human frame, without which knowledge he will not be able to perform that branch of his duties with due efficiency. I do not lay much stress on this knowledge, however, as I believe it is often acquired and put into practical use, with a rope's

end or otherwise, by captains of small vessels and other intelligent laymen who may have to do with boys.

Besides, the good dominie must be able to read human nature, and to read it, too, from imperfect characters, in various kinds of type. He must know the mystery of the human passions, and be skilful to work with them as with precious ore. And not a few other talents and accomplishments he must have, which many men who are better paid and more highly thought of for their work, may never attain to, and yet make names and fortunes.

I don't dwell much upon his stock-in-trade of Latin, and Greek, and mathematics, and history, and geography, and so forth, because his success as a teacher will not depend so much on his learning as on the way in which he makes use of it. The man with the largest capital is not the most successful in business, but he who is most active and prudent and pains-taking in laying it out. But people, in choosing an instructor for their sons, seldom think of this, and generally prefer one with the most imposing array of letters after his name.

Thus it will be seen that our work is a noble and a worthy one. But more, it is a happy work ; it has pleasures that far outweigh its vexations, though hitherto I have dwelt more upon these latter. Ought not a life to be happy and healthy which is spent

among happy and healthy boys? There is a Paradise upon earth, from the gates of which the hard, proud, worldly heart is repelled by the words burning in letters of fire, 'Except ye be as one of these.' Near these gates do we dwell, and many a glad glimpse we catch of the fair land within. Many a ray of sunlight is thrown across our path by the pure thoughts and the kindly words and the honest joys of boyhood.

This very day as I was going to punish a timid, shrinking boy who had committed a grievous offence against my Medo-Persic laws, his classmates begged him off, and by a large majority agreed to learn an extra lesson if he were not punished. And lately, when I was going to punish a boy for an injury done to a companion, that companion came to me privately and entreated me to let him take the punishment instead. I and other dominies could tell many such stories. Are these things not sunshine to our hearts?

And when a boy has been naughty and is sorry, and bears his punishment manfully and meekly, and listens to my reproof, and does not sulk nor spite me, and tells that he will not do it again, and I know that he is speaking sincerely, is this not good and happy?

And sometimes a father or mother comes to talk with me about one of my pupils, and is not super-

cilious nor prejudiced nor blindly affectionate, but treats me with respect and consideration, and believes that I am doing my best for the boy, and is grateful to me for it, and enters into my difficulties, and shows readiness to aid my efforts. Will this not comfort and strengthen me in my work ?

Or when men, who were once my boys, and worried and vexed me, and were whipped and rebuked by me, come back to thank me for what I have done for them, will that not make me happy ? It is a pleasant thing to know that even if they do not appreciate your interest in them as boys, there are very few men who have other than a kindly feeling towards their old tyrants. I believe that only bad men look back with hate upon the strictest of schoolmasters. I have met once, and, thank Heaven, only once, with a man who spoke bitterly and spitefully of a highly respected extant dominie who had given him a well-deserved thrashing many years before. I did not seek that individual's further acquaintance.

And it is sweet and joyful for us at all times to be able to rejoice over boys who are gradually improving, taking an interest in their studies, coming even to love them, overcoming bad habits, trying to do right. This is what we may see daily, if we open our eyes ; and if we see other boys doing ill, we should not grieve overmuch, but hope and pray that God in His own good time, and by other lips than ours, may

teach them those lessons which we cannot make them learn.

The life of the faithful and wise dominie should indeed be a happy one. For—I say it at the risk of seeming tedious and commonplace—the happiest life is that which is spent in doing good.



CHAPTER XII.

DAY-DREAMS OF THE DOMINIE.

‘Fecisti nos, Domine, ad te ; et irrequietum est cors nostrum donec requiescat in te.’—AUGUSTINE.



HAVE read a book called *The Day-Dreams of a Schoolmaster*, which seems to me the pleasantest book ever written about dominies. This dry work of mine does not aim at presenting the reader with dreams, but with hard facts which I have seen and would speak of ; nevertheless, it will not be out of place if I try to paint some of the dreams which come to me when my day's work is done, and my tired thoughts leave the stern lessons of this world, and fly to the kindly sports of fancyland.

I like to imagine myself retired from the cares of dominieship, ending my days in peace and leisure. I shut my eyes on work and care, and a vision arises before me of a cottage, at the porch of which, covered

with gay roses and gentle jasmine, I am sitting on a summer evening, watching the red glory of the sunset change into the solemnly beautiful hues of twilight. Behind my cottage is a little wood, sweet with violets, and before it a grassy bank, sloping down to a sparkling brook. And near me is the sea, and around me are the grand blue hills among which I spent my boyhood. And as I sit and hear the babbling of the brook, and the singing of the birds, and the lowing of the cattle, and the cheery talk of men and women returning from their daily toil, I know that I am far from the bustle of cities and the hard hearts of men hastening to be rich. But the chief charms of my visions are the lady who sits by my side, and the children who cling to our knees, or toddle gravely about us, or sport merrily around the cottage, never going so far away that we cannot hear their clear voices and happy laughter. And my wife is young and beautiful, and loves me more than all the world. And Latin grammar is a mystery to her, and she would tremble at the very idea of reading a paper before the Social Science Association. But she knows how to rule over our domestic economy with care and prudence, and how to teach our children those things which they learn better from her loving instinct than by all the systems of the most learned dominies in the world. She knows, too, how to spread a happy sunshine of love through our home, which makes it a

little temple on earth, and scares away the evil spirits begot of darkness and moody solitude. Thus, gently and carelessly, I pass away the summer evening of my life, her fair hand clasped in mine, her silken tresses resting softly on my shoulders, her sweet face looking trustfully into my eyes. And I am contented, and my wife is kind and beautiful, and my children are honest and healthy, and God has blessed us ; what can I desire more ? But I open my eyes, and lo ! it is all a dream, for I am sitting in my cheerless study, the table untidily littered with papers, and the grim volumes in the library covered with dust. And then comes upon me, with double force, the unutterable sadness of being alone. This is why I would be willing to exchange places with that naughty little boy whom I had to punish so severely this afternoon. His tears have doubtless dried long ago, for he has a mother and brothers and sisters to whom he can tell all his troubles, and in their mirth and kindness forget them, while I—I must bear my share of work and woe alone.

Once I thought that this dream of mine about a home, or part of it, would become more than a dream. While young and full of hope I met at a seaside town, where I was passing my holidays, a woman whom I loved, and fain would have made my wife. I saw her to be fair, and thought that she was true. And she said that she loved me, and would ever love me ; but

she lied. For when it was told her that I was only a dominie—that the work of my life was to whip and scold boys—she killed the young love in her heart. Ah! that she could have bid mine die as easily! And then she married a subaltern officer, about whose gentility Mrs. Grundy made no question. It is too commonplace a story to interest the reader, and I will not dwell upon it. I have tried to forgive and forget her; but when I take from its hanging-place the crumbling skeleton of a roseal which she gave me as we walked by the side of a quiet river many, many years ago, a fierce bitter longing rises in my heart, and I pray God to let me wet the withered flower with tears.

Thus is it that I have lived unmarried all my life, and that, if my visionary cottage be ever built elsewhere than in my mind's eye, its only tenant will be a cynical, grumbling old bachelor. So this dream of mine begins in pleasure and ends in pain. Away with it, and call up another which shall soothe and comfort me without re-opening old wounds.

The other day, when bothered and worried and wearied by the thoughtlessness of boys and the foolishness of parents, I sat down in my easy-chair, and had a dream of a school in a far-off Utopia, of which I was head-master. In that school all the boys were good and happy and healthy, and all the teachers were wise and kind and earnest. And the boys,

moreover, had all frank eyes and patched jackets, and spent their play hours not in lounging about streets or smoking cigars in secret corners, but in running and leaping and shouting and laughing, and suchlike vulgar enjoyments. But they all learned their lessons and attended to what they were taught; and if any of them ever were punished, it afterwards turned out that he had suffered not for his own fault, but heroically screening a companion. And now and then a boy did a naughty thing and was sorry for it; and oh! how sweet was that repentance—just to relieve the monotony of perfect virtue. And so I could be familiar and yet strict with all the boys, and they loved me and made me their friend and comforter in every little trouble. And their parents respected me, and took an interest in my work, but did not worry me by being meddlesome overmuch. And I was kind and patient and cheerful, and lived long to see the seed given me to sow on earth sprout up to bear goodly and manifold fruit. And alas! this, too, was a dream.

Then I try to dream that I am a boy once more, to realize what it is to be ruled, that I may learn how to rule. I dream of the buoyant spirit which I once felt and rejoiced in, but which, alas! comes no more. I dream of the zest with which I would share boyish sports, and the blessed tears in which I would drown boyish griefs. I dream that I am loved by boyish

friends with a true and pure love which I have never found in man. I dream of myself rising up in honest wrath to avenge the oppressed, or bearing torture without a murmur, rather than betray my companion. I dream of the pleasure that one kind word from one I loved and looked up to would give me, and the pride with which I would serve and obey such a one. But, ah! of all dreams, these are the most unreal. They come but to mock me, and fade away when they have filled me with a bitter yearning. I cannot make them my own, these glimpses of youth.

‘Sudden strays of recollection, glimmering from the depths of time,

Fleeting into misty darkness from the feeble grasp of rhyme.’

They have gone from me for ever, like the companions with whom I try to dream that I am sporting once more, but whose hearts and hands are no longer mine, since their ways in life have taken them apart from me. Some I still know, but they are not the same as once I knew them. Some I have lost sight of or forgotten. Some are dead to me, their hearts being seared by the red-hot iron of sin; and some, more happily, dead, asleep in the quiet of English churchyards, beneath the vineyards or the palms of other lands, below the waves of the cruel sea. So this dream, too, brings sorrow rather than joy.

I often indulge in another dream which is better than all these, not only because it is sweet to the mind

and healing to the heart, but because it must one day come true. It is a dream which is familiar to me, and comes to me at all times and in all places, chiefly in hours of thoughtful solitude, but often in crowded parlours and scenes of so-called gaiety. Call me not sentimentally melancholy that I love to dream calmly and fearlessly of the day when I shall be lying beneath the green grass and the gentle daisies, at peace with myself and the world. The storms and sunbeams of life shall struggle over and around that quiet spot, but nought shall hurt or harm me, for I shall be at rest, and my Father shall have folded me in His arms, and for ever wiped all tears from off my face. But I dare not be proud nor angry now, when I think how little men will esteem me then, and how little there will be to vex me there. I think, too, with anxious care that some will live to curse that humble grave of mine, for words spoken hastily and bitterly—words that may bear evil seed for all time, till the Lord come and destroy the tares from the face of the earth. And I think with joy and hope that if I lay up such treasures in my life, some may come to bless me, and to drop a tear of remembrance on the flowers that grow above my head.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOLIDAYS.

'Jam pastor umbras cum grege languido
Rivumque fessus quærit, et horridi
Dumeta Silvani.'

HORACE.



ONCE a year there comes a time when our pace on the road to Helicon manifestly slackens. The best boys grow restless and inattentive, and even the most zealous dominie relaxes his stern sway and begins to discover that he is 'boy-rid ; sick of perpetual boy.' Through the open windows of our dusty schoolrooms steal the balmy airs and the pleasant sunbeams of June ; welcome intruders, bringing with them tempting memories of green meadows and bright, breezy hill-sides, and making the musty rules of grammar and the wise precepts of the Latin Delectus doubly dry and distasteful. Custom and inclination for once agree that this is no time for parsing and translating ; nature calls us to sweeter studies. The holidays—

not the dark, cold idleness of Christmas, nor the shred of purposeless vacuity grudgingly vouchsafed us in spring, but *the* holidays have come—the summer vacation, when the dusty dominie may throw off his gown and bathe in a Lethe of green leaves and way-side flowers, and forget alike the past winter's work and the autumn looming before him big with new toils. For when such joys begin neither schoolboy nor schoolmaster believes that they can ever end.

The day arrives; not too soon. The boys, mad with excitement, are off to their dogs and ponies and fishing-rods; the dominies, with quieter, though not less true, joy, lock up their books and instruments of torture in a kind of dreamy incredulousness. We can scarcely believe that we shall for weeks look upon them no more; scarcely realize that we have escaped from the dull round of precepts and punishments, which, perhaps, never seemed insupportable till now. We are both indeed free: they from our tyranny; we from theirs.

But in a day or two what is so delightfully new and strange grows familiar to us. Doing absolutely nothing is to the busy man more tiresome than hard work. We look about for occupation and amusement for our leisure. We have got our holiday, and the question for us is, 'What shall we do with it?'

If the dominie is a wise man he will not stay at home all the holidays. He will leave the hot pave-

ments of the city, and seek in other and purer air to lay up a stock of health and freshness against the next year's labour. If he is a steady, middle-aged man with a family, he will probably remove his Lares and Penates to a country house, not far from town, and near some good trout-stream, and there spend the holidays in fishing, playing with his children, and writing papers for the *Quarterly Journal of Education*. If he is a young man and a bachelor, he will perhaps set forth on foot, rejoicing in his strength, through the Welsh or the Scotch hills, or among the Lakes that Wordsworth has made sacred to him. If he is a rich man, he may cross the Channel, and thereafter be seen sauntering, cigar in mouth, upon the boulevards of Paris, or rushing over the great Corniche road, or 'doing' German cathedrals and castles, or panting up the rough sides of Vesuvius. But if he is a man of my tastes, and of no larger purse, he will betake himself to a cottage or other suitable abode in the Highlands of Scotland, and there open his eyes and lift up his heart and confess that what God hath made is good. My favourite holiday retreat is a spot in the West Highlands, a glen, poor indeed to the commercial eye, but rich in beauty and peace and other priceless blessings that cannot be bought or sold,—a sanctuary for the soul wearied by work and care. There I can roam all day on noble hills untrodden by the sacrilegious foot of

Cockney tourist, and lie on a royal couch of heather, and feel on my face the fresh, cool mountain breeze, and watch the ever-changing hues of sky and earth, and gaze out on the wide Atlantic with something of childish wonder, and listen to the merry roar of the waterfall, that like me seems to rejoice in its freedom. There, all day long, I can sing with the poet, 'Oh the great joy of living!' For there, the very breathing of the fresh, pure air, and the very bounding from tuft to tuft of purple heather seems rapturously joyful.

There are other spots too which please me, and which I can recommend to dominies who wish to pass happy holidays. Shall I speak no word of praise or gratitude for thee, oh quaint old city by the eastern shore, to whose green downs and far-reaching sands flock alike the seekers of health and pleasure and learning? Shall I be silent concerning that sun-loved county of the south, through whose shady hedges and deep, thick meadow-grass a man may saunter and dream of eternal summer? Or can I despise the rich and varied feast of beauty that I have enjoyed and hope to enjoy again among the hills and valleys and rivers and forests of a certain inland district, where the dwellers in the plains have overcome the sentinels of the mountain land, and clothed them with double loveliness?

Anywhere I can enjoy myself, provided I am away from home. '*Cælum non animum mutant qui trans*

mare currunt,' wrote the ancient poet. But he spoke for himself. For my part, with my abode I change my thoughts and habits and sympathies. How could it be otherwise? It is only when I am not at home that I become myself. While at my post I am conscious that there are many eyes fixed upon me, and I cannot set them at defiance. I become a hypocrite; I deceive myself. My heart calls on me to worship the God of nature, but my cowardice leads me to bow down in the house of Mrs. Grundy. But once let the dominie place two hundred miles between himself and his sphere of duty, and he becomes free; he may hold up his head and feel himself no longer a dominie, but a man. Clad in his oldest shooting-jacket he may lie on the sandy sea-shore or the mossy hill-side, and smoke the pipe of contemplation and thankfulness without fear. And if he meets with any little boys, like himself out on holiday, he can find a joy in their ruddy cheeks and their clear, happy voices, and their patched knickerbockers, which all the rest of the year is denied to him. For he can join their sports, and win their confidence, and listen to their frank prattle, and help them to build castles on the sand, and run and jump and laugh with them, till he almost fancy himself to be a boy again. They do not shrink from him as if he were an ogre or an archbishop, and their easily-gained and unsuspecting friendship is sweet to the dominie *incognito*, though

sometimes his conscience reproaches him with the guilty pleasure, and he whispers sadly to his heart, 'If they only knew—!' Reader, I remember making the acquaintance of a boy under these circumstances, and cultivating a friendship with him which came to a sad and unexpected end. For these holiday weeks we were constant companions, in spite of the difference in our ages. We bathed and boated and fished and walked and joked together. He was a good-humoured, pleasant boy, and I daresay he thought me not a bad fellow, more tolerable than most old fogies. At all events he never suspected the truth. As for me, I came to love him and delighted in him, with a joy too great to last. A terrible fate indeed befell our friendship. When the holidays were over, my young friend chanced to be sent to the very school in which I am a master. What were my feelings! I could not look my companion of so many glad hours in the face; I stood before him a *detected dominie*. Henceforth our intimacy was at an end.

Some modern dominies profess to be always on the most friendly terms with their boys; to be brotherly counsellors, not dread rulers to them. This may be well; but I doubt I am an old-fashioned dominie; I cling by old traditions. I am willing to be a friend to my pupils, but with a distant and lofty friendship. I must feel myself, and make them feel, that I am exalted above them. I cannot play cricket with them

lest they should mark my scores, and suspect that I am a fallible being. So it is only in the holidays that I can descend from my throne, and wander through the city unknown, like Haroun Alraschid.

Idleness is to me the least pleasure of the holidays. True, it is sweet to the busy man to taste of leisure ; sweet to wake in the morning and know that I have no lessons to hear, no exercises to correct, no punishments to inflict, no parents to propitiate. But because the sweetness is so great it soon palls upon the taste. The energy gained by leisure begins to throb within me and urge me to fresh labours. The dust of the battle once wiped off, like Alexander, I am restless to conquer new worlds. And thus before the holidays are over I am generally tired of them, which I look upon as a bountiful dispensation of nature.

So back we go to town, not altogether sorrowfully, not altogether gladly. Perhaps we have insensibly taken root in the spot of our holiday sojourn, and only find, when we come to tear ourselves away, how great an effort the transplanting requires. Perhaps, as we hurry homewards, we see tender-hearted boys taking tearful leave of their mothers, and, as the inexorable train bears them away, casting rueful glances at familiar spots and objects which they shall not see again for many months. And if our hearts are not seared by time and toil to kindly sympathy, we cannot but

be troubled to know that we dominies are the autumn winds and the sharp frosts that come to end their little summers.

But, gladly or sadly, the Fates must be obeyed. Our caravans assemble ; we gird ourselves with the robes of office, and taking up the staff of leadership give the order to march. The camels and mules, after some preliminary gambols, submit to be loaded with their burdens and driven into line, and finally got into motion, *non passibus æquis*. So with one last look at the oasis with its cool wells and fresh dews and grateful shade, off we set, under the morning sun of hope, on another stage of our desert journey.



CHAPTER XIV.

SATURDAY—WITH SOMETHING ABOUT FOOLS.

‘I will bury myself in my books, and the devil may pipe to his own.’
TENNYSON.

IN my part of the country, custom, if not convenience, gives dominies two entire days of rest in the week, Saturday and Sunday. It may not be amiss that the reader should learn how we spend these days. I devote this chapter to Saturday.

I enjoy Saturday in a lazy, tired sort of way, which is very pleasant if not very stimulating. Some dominies, I among them, are like cab-horses; we go as long as we are in harness, and drop as soon as we are taken out of the shafts. So on Saturday morning I awake, feeling weary, but very thankful that there is no morning school at nine o'clock, and then turn on my side for a succession of delicious dozes, till the

sun rebukes me through the open window and I leisurely get up and begin to dress.

At breakfast I begin to revel in idleness. I dawdle over my coffee and read the newspaper through at my ease, not skim over its pages as on other days. In the afternoon, again, I luxuriate among the weekly journals, keeping abreast of the literature of the day by reading all the reviews, and speculating what the critics had for supper the night before they wrote them. Some Saturday afternoon, I may be reading the verdicts passed upon this humble work, and shall perhaps find from the *Weekly Scourge* that 'it is full of crude and commonplace thoughts, and only deserving of our attention from the absurdity of its pretensions ;' while the critic of the *Metropolitan Review* may pronounce it to be 'a work which all thinking men will welcome, teeming as it does with the fruit of a rare genius and experience.'

In the evening I like to go to the house of some friend, where I may join in thoughtful and cheery talk, and hear the gentle voice of women and the pleasant laugh of children, sounds sweet to a bachelor's lonely soul. I hate the very name of parties, the great meetings at which I am given to understand that Mrs. Grundy assembles her votaries, to crush and squeeze a little show of enjoyment out of each other. But I dearly love a quiet dinner or supper with two or three friends, not acquaintances, where

all of us are literally and figuratively in our shooting-coats, and agreed to unbend and enjoy ourselves as thoroughly as possible. And what might seem very little enjoyment to idle people, goes a long way with us who have hard work to do.

But the great characteristic of my Saturdays is a walk, which I take in the best of all company—my own. Sometimes I walk in the town and sometimes in the country, according to my mood. I dwell in a city which one may walk through many times and not be tired of its beauty, and which is moreover surrounded by many kinds of beautiful scenery. So when I want to be cheerful I go out into the suburbs of that queen of cities, and stroll on through pleasant fields and gardens, till perhaps I come to a picturesque range of hills, and perhaps to the shores of a noble river full of graceful ships and rocky islands, or perhaps only wander on through a long stretch of varied landscape, whose woods and streams and meadows are not less fair than any in the kingdom. And perhaps I lie down under the fresh greenness of a lime-tree, and dream lazily of all the good and happy things and people in the world ; of how many thousand pleasant fields and cool woodland glades there are, speaking to millions with silent voices, and telling of their Maker's goodness and greatness ; of how many happy songs there are to sing on the earth, and how many cheerful and thankful hearts to sing them ; of

how many brave, wise, true men there are, working with all their might for the good of their fellow-creatures ; of how many fortunate people there are who never eat nor sleep nor work too much, and consequently always have sound slumbers and healthy appetites ; of how many errand-boys there are who can whistle at their work, and how many dirty little children who can find delight in mud-pies ; of how many labouring lads who are looking forward to a half-holiday and a walk with Jenny or Polly ; of how many schoolmasters who to-day are resting in their easy-chairs and beginning to think that life is bearable after all ; of how many schoolboys, equally glad to be free, who are roaming about, chattering, laughing, quarrelling and forgiving again, climbing trees, tearing trousers, getting knocks and bruises and glorying in the same,—bathing, cricketing, rowing, and otherwise enjoying all the happiness of healthy boyhood, untroubled as yet by glimpses of the tyrant Mrs. Grundy and her satellite train, lying in wait for them upon the dimly seen hills of manhood.

But, on the other hand, when I want to be ‘sad for very wantonness,’—there is no slight pleasure in such sadness,—I walk through a certain street, which is the fashionable lounge of our city, and which for the sake of definition I will call Princess Street, and there become profoundly melancholy at seeing how many fools there are in the world. Come with me, reader,

along this splendid street, and observe a few of those we meet, and then judge for yourself if they are not fools.

Here come two, young, ignorant, with folly written on every line of their smooth faces. What neat coats and neckties they have, and what slim canes daintily carried! What large and abominable cigars they are trying to smoke, and with what an air are they twirling between lavender-gloved fingers the gold watch-chains grandmamma gave them last birthday! They are full-blown specimens of the genus young gentleman, in its most ridiculous type. They think that every one is looking at them, and that the ladies are flattered by their puerile admiration. And yet, perhaps, they are strong healthy fellows, who might be rowing or cricketing or otherwise spending their holiday without making fools of themselves. Perhaps in ten years they will see the folly of trying to become men too soon by imitating the follies of their elders, and perhaps they may long regretfully for one hour of the boyhood which they are now so foolishly despising. I hope so. That slim one with the light hair looks as if he had a mother at home who is anxious lest her Johnny should get into bad company; and as for his stout, good-humoured-looking companion, I think he must have a papa who canes him when he is caught smoking.

We have some compassion for you young fools, for

we hope that you will get sense with age, that the present attack of folly is one which will wear off when the eruption is over. But what shall we say to you fools of ten years' more experience who are idling along, affectedly pulling your whiskers, and ogling the pretty women with unchaste thoughts and whispers. They—the whiskers—are long and imposing, and your coats are works of genius, and your gloves irreproachable, but you have mistaken the world if you believe it to be simply a stage for the display of these articles. What shall we say of you who have slowly poisoned your moral lives by dissipation and foppery and idleness? We will not call you men, nor even gentlemen, as you so fondly pride yourselves upon being. You are only an inferior species of animal with fine whiskers and trousers, inhabitants of Princess Street, but with little share in the world at large, save in the awful responsibilities attached to every one of God's wisely fashioned and largely endowed human creatures.

And here drive past two fools of the same kind, but of the other sex. They, too, have bartered the simple comeliness and the innocent pleasures of nature for the shallow gilding of art and the tiresome excitement of fashion. They look very beautiful and proud as they recline elegantly in that padded carriage; but after all they are only what they seek to be, masses of silk, steel, and ribbon, with a substra-

tum of flesh and blood, and the sickly remains of a human heart that God's goodness gives to all, and man's folly can never entirely take away from any.

That party of young officers of the garrison to whom they are bowing are fools too, *me judice*. What airs the fellows give themselves because their recognised trade is honourable idleness, with intervals of no less honourable bloodshed! How contemptuously they twirl their moustaches at their civilian fellow-creatures, and in how self-satisfied a manner do they look down upon the whole world from over their stiff collars and faultless cravats! I know they are brave—though no braver than the rest of us, but for that very reason I am heartily sorry that they should so often make such fools of themselves.

Here struts by an old fool, ay, and a miserable sinner—a purple-faced dandy in a wig, leering, mocking, gloating over the garbage of life, draining the dregs of his youthful folly with one foot in the grave. He loves nothing but himself, and believes in nothing but mammon and Bacchus and Mrs. Grundy. Very likely too he is a glutton and a gambler. Pah! this folly is sickening. I cannot laugh over it, as some writers do, but must speak my mind sorrowfully and angrily. And so soon to die!—is it not sad?

Now here comes a fool at whom we smile indulgently—the clever fool. See how he rushes along the street, with mysterious looks and long hair floating

over his shoulders, his outer man enveloped in a coat like nobody else's coat, and his head covered by a hat quite different from all sane, commonplace people's hats. This is a literary genius, who thinks a great deal of himself, and fondly imagines the delusion to be shared by the public. He imagines that every word, look, and action of his is noticed, and will be handed down to posterity, and therefore he takes care that all his words, looks, and actions be singular. He preaches loudly in his books against every person and everything but himself, while the fact is that he is not very different from any one else. But, at all events, he thinks that he is, and there you may see him looking wisely conceited, like a clever fool that he is.

Ah! what sort of fool have we here? The other fools look upon him with distrust, and seem to regard him as an intruder. For he is a jay in peacock's feathers, a grocer's shop-boy, most likely, aping the folly of the superior fools. What a magnificent strut he has, and how contemptuously he looks upon the smooth, modestly but harmoniously coloured, plumage of the real peacocks! Ah, my friend, don't trust too much to that splendid waistcoat, nor to that gaudy cravat, nor to that glittering watch-chain, nor yet to that three-halfpenny cigar, which you would like to pitch into the gutter, if you only dared. Your gray plumage is peeping out beneath, and the pea-

cocks know at a glance what you are. Go back to the jays, and leave such folly to your betters.

Then there is the fool who is a wise, cunning man of business through the day, and only appears as a fool in Princess Street in the afternoon ; there is the very foolish fool, who denotes by his attire that his folly lies in the direction of horses and dogs ; there is even the fool ecclesiastical—alas ! that I should have to write it—who glides along with a meek look of genteel sanctity, and imagines that by a prim, outlandish attire and a peculiar style of necktie he does much to honour God and pleases the female portion of his congregation.

In short, there are fools of all sorts and sizes who frequent Princess Street daily, to admire and to be admired. It is to see and to scorn such creatures that I sometimes repair thither on Saturday afternoons, when my stomach is out of order, and my moral nature wants a little wholesome stimulus. But seeing all these fools often makes me very melancholy and distrustful of human nature, so much so, indeed, that I begin to feel that after all I am only a fool myself. Then, perhaps, I turn wearily into a certain quiet garden in the neighbourhood of Princess Street, where nursery-maids meet to talk gossip, and genteel little children imitate in many ways the folly of their elders, with glimpses of honest nature and healthy childish wisdom peeping out now and then,

which not even French governesses can restrain. And lying in these gardens, within hearing of the prattling of their merry lips, I can see the spires of certain churches and chapels where many of these fools pay for white surplices and carved oak stalls and stained windows, and other appliances for the worship of the Maker of all, and whither at certain times they repair decorously to go through the folly of supplicating, in foolish falsehood, Him who is alone to be entreated in spirit and in truth. I know that I speak censoriously and scornfully, and not at all genteelly, but I speak so because I am sick of fools and their folly, turning into evil so many things that God made to be good.

For He made all. Our wisdom and folly are alike in His hand ; and, however degraded, we are all more or less faint images of Himself. And thus there is hope for us all, fools though we be. The bells of that church hard by are saying so, and lull me into a pleasant dream of a happy age when fashionable tailors, and Parisian milliners, and billiard markers, and editors of peerages shall be no more kings and priests upon earth, but all men shall be only men, true, simple, and brave, with the words of the poet written on the heart of each—

‘Tis only noble to be good,
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.’

Doubtless that time will come, and is coming ; and as a first-fruits of it we may some day expect to see Princess Street given up to be the dismal abode of such fools as I have spoken of, who, tied to Mrs. Grundy's tattered apron-string, shall flit about its pavements uttering their feeble wails of sorrow and fear, while all around throbs the great world with its mighty pulses of life and death, good and evil, grief and joy, hastening surely and steadily on to the appointed goal. And when the fools are reduced to this piteous state, I shall not look on them with the same interest as I do now while they are proud and stiff-necked ; and therefore my Saturday walks along Princess Street will be discontinued, if indeed by that time I have not made my last journey upon earth.



CHAPTER XV.

SUNDAY—WITH SOMETHING ABOUT SERMONS.

‘ One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the *preachers* can.’

WORDSWORTH.



AM sorry to say that Sunday is not always a very happy day with me ; chiefly because I do not see other people happy on that day. The town where I have lived most of my life is ruled by a strict Sabbatarianism, the edicts of which are duly countersigned by Mrs. Grundy, and almost universally respected among her disciples. And if one good come of these strict laws, that one man cannot buy or steal another's day of rest, there are also many evils, which prevent the rest of all from being so pleasant and refreshing as God meant it to be.

It must be remembered, if I be thought to speak

too strongly, that there is one Sunday blessing which is not for me. I have no bright faces and curly heads to lie on my lap and stroke my furrowed face, and prattle out their little joys and sorrows, and romp round my chair till my heart forgets its cares, and catches some ray of their sunny freshness. I have kind and constant friends, and wise and good companions, but I have none of those dear ones whose love and companionship should make this day very holy.

These thoughts came into my mind last Sunday morning as I was taking a walk in the country. Yes, orthodox reader, it is as well to come out with it and have done. I do not go regularly to church. I do not believe in the eleventh commandment which so many good people have written in their hearts, 'Thou shalt go twice to church, and shalt listen to two sermons of such and such a length.' (By the way, why twice only? Why not thrice or four times? If this be the 'means of grace,' by all means let us get as much grace as possible, seeing the sore need of it we are in.) A clergyman whom I know once told me with something like horror of a friend of his, who was a German, and though an excellent person in other respects, was avowedly godless enough 'to go to church only when he felt inclined.' This is my case. I go to church only when I feel inclined, and when I feel inclined also I go to worship

God among His works in a glorious temple not built by human hands, which the Lord Himself hath made and adorned for His service, where the angels are my fellow-worshippers, and all things in nature my preachers.

I felt inclined, then, last Sunday to go a walk in the country, and as I went by the brown hedges still damp with rain, and saw the sun chasing the heavy purple clouds from the bright spring sky, and felt the cold cheery breeze on my face, till my heart sang a quiet and silent strain of thanksgiving, I thought how much better I was employed than if I had been in church. At the best, if I had been in one church, I should have been trying to fix my mind upon the vain repetition of certain beautiful and pious sentiments familiar to me from childhood ; or, in another, I should have been making an attempt to listen to an address to the Creator, after a fashion sanctioned by the usage of centuries, wherein a man stands up and informs his Maker of all His perfections, which were better to be more believed in and less talked about, and concludes by asking in symbolical language for certain shadowy and hazy benefits professed to be desired by the congregation. Of these two, I prefer the first form of worship. If we are to have repetition—and what are all our prayers but repetitions—let it be the repetition of something simple and yet good, familiar and yet holy. In that ritual our prayers are at least for tangible blessings, that we

may be kept from running into sin and danger ; that God may make His ways known unto all men ; that He may look with pity upon all who are in trouble or distress ; that He may give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth. But in the other church to which I have alluded, there is but little time given to asking for those things which God is far more ready to give than we to pray for, and the greater part of that little time is taken up with enumerating and describing ‘ dews,’ and ‘ mannas,’ and ‘ fountains,’ which sound very well in a pulpit, but which to children and ignorant people and sceptics like me do not seem to have much connexion with the daily joys and sorrows of life.

Most likely then, if I had been at church, I should have been in a church of this first kind. And very probably my thoughts would be wandering away from these beautiful prayers to more mundane objects around me, speculating how ridiculous it was for a man of Mr. Smith’s age to wear such a gaudy scarf, and how silly Miss Brown looked in her new-fashioned apology for a bonnet, and whether General Jones wore a wig, or had had his hair dyed. And perhaps I would be painfully conscious that Jones Major was watching me with much interest, nudging Jones Minor whenever I coughed or blew my nose, and studying my dress and personal appearance for the benefit of his sisters at lunch-time. And then I would be mak-

ing censorious comments upon the conduct of others, pronouncing decisively in my own mind that Mr. Green had better not come to church at all if he was to do nothing but yawn behind his handkerchief ; and that it was disgusting hypocrisy in Mrs. Green to pretend to look so hard at her prayer-book while all the time she was peeping over it at Mrs. Black's new dress. And I might be thinking too that the clergyman was a very bad reader, and that his curate's long black whiskers made his face look even sillier than it was, and so on.

And then would have come the sermon ; which to me is most wearisome and repugnant. How it ever came to be received among Christian communities that people could not assemble on Sunday to worship God without having to listen for a certain time to the ideas, or want of ideas, of a man neither better nor wiser than themselves, I cannot tell. But it is a fact that a sermon has come to be a regular part of our worship, and to some people by far the more important part. It seems to me that though such teaching may be necessary for heathens and ignorant people, it is not for educated and conscientious men who may claim to know at least as much as their so-called teacher about a subject on which there are so many different opinions. The great point in a true teacher's character is that he knows more than his pupils. As a dominie, I see this in a very clear light, and nothing

appears more ridiculous to me than a youthful priest, fresh from a university, who has the monopoly of exhorting and expounding to wise and good men of all ages upon the great affairs which should be the chief interest of every life.

Sometimes we meet with a really clever preacher, but it generally seems to me that his cleverness is out of place in the pulpit. One man is a poet, and his sermons consist of poetry tintured with religion. Another man is a mathematician, and his sermons are full of scientific and mechanical allusions dragged in to the aid of divinity. A third is a logician, and he delights to pilot us through the deepest metaphysical questions of theology, to the weariness of men who do not relish such inquiries, and the admiration of those who do not understand them. Of these the poet is the least objectionable. Religion and poetry are so closely connected that many of their beauties are in common. But if Sunday is a day of rest, why should our churches be turned into lecture-rooms of natural or mental philosophy? Such learned preaching may please stupid old ladies and clever young gentlemen, but not dominies nor other men who have hard work to do through the week, and want on Sunday to be idle and happy and careless.

I fear I shall be thought hard to please if, after what I have said of clever preachers, I protest with equal severity against stupid preachers. The majority of

clergymen are ordinary commonplace men like you and me ; and if they must preach two new sermons every week, what can they compose them of but changes rung upon a certain phraseology and a certain set of dogmatic assertions, which their hearers may or may not assent to. Sometimes they preface these assertions with a little argument which is not enough to convince those who do not agree with them, and too much for those who do. I do not think our Sunday services are a fit time for theological controversy, but if we are to have reasoning and disputation, let it be good, especially considering that the argument here is all on one side. I have heard so many clergymen leading us with polished and elegant sentences up through a discussion on some profound subject, and then passing over the point on which the whole argument turns with some such pretty sentence as this :— ‘I am aware that sceptics and worldly-minded men, indeed, say so and so ; but, my beloved brethren, Holy Scripture is so very plain on this point, that it is unnecessary for me to detain you by,’ etc.

To speak earnestly and impressively in public is a talent which probably not one man in a hundred possesses. If worthy people, then, find that they must have their virtue tickled up by two weekly orations, why need these orations be original ? Sir Roger de Coverley was a wiser man than the congregations of our day, who made his parson a present of

‘all the good sermons which had been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series that they follow one another naturally, and make a continual system of practical divinity.’ The honest *Spectator* approvingly compares this plan with the practice of those clergymen who ‘waste their spirits in laborious compositions of their own;’ and adds very sensibly, ‘this would not only be more easie to themselves, but more edifying to the people.’ It would be well if this plan were followed in the present day by many of our preachers. The Reverend Mr. Youthful may have nothing particularly striking or instructive to say in the pulpit; why then not have him read to us one of the sermons of some of the many good men to whom God *has* given the power to speak and write words that can move the heart? ‘No, that won’t do,’ pronounces modern Orthodoxy, dubiously shaking its head. Is it the man, then, and not the doctrine that you go to hear? ‘No, but,’ repeats Orthodoxy, and then finding it difficult to devise an answer, shifts its ground, and wrathfully turns upon us, ‘it is you latitudinarians who cry out for the signs of man’s wisdom. We are content to hear the word of God from whatever weak lips.’ Why, then, do you run so much after Mr. So-and-so and Dr. Such-a-one, while Mr. Dull at the neighbouring

church has to preach to empty pews? And yet Mr. Dull declares what you believe to be the word of God, with as much fidelity, if with less attractiveness, than his more admired brethren. No, you are not consistent. If it is the pure word of God you want, I for one would agree to have the Sermon on the Mount read every Sunday in our churches till all of us have learned to obey its precepts, and so would many other wicked sceptics whom you accuse of seeking after novelty and human wisdom.

One great reason why I would have our clergymen allowed to preach honestly the sermons of others, is because I know many of them do so dishonestly. I know what certain reverend gentlemen are about when they lock themselves up in their studies all Saturday forenoon. The library in those studies contains the works of Tillotson, Barrow, Lowth, and many other sound divines, from whom our friends get schemes and thoughts for their discourses, supplying themselves only the poor style and the bad arrangement. And there is even a worse hypocrisy carried on in the clerical profession, else to what end those sly advertisements in the *Times*, offering to supply, at eighteenpence each, or thereabout, sound, practical, and neatly written sermons. I had always thought that these articles were only bought on the sly by a very doubtful kind of parsons, but the other day, looking over a church directory, I found

printed in fair large type upon a whole page, an unblushing circular regarding the merits of a stock of lithographed, not printed, sermons, which were to be retailed at so much each, with a reduction I dare say to those taking a quantity. There is a depth of clerical cowardice and deceit in that word *lithographed* which I dare not trust myself to speak of. Since learning about this traffic in holy words, I have felt less inclined to go to church than ever, as I am always suspicious that I am being treated to an eighteen-penny sermon. I don't want to boast, but I think I could preach for myself at home as good a sermon as any parson could get for even half-a-crown—I might even go the length of naming three and sixpence.

But I am an enemy to sermons, not only on my own account, but for the sake of my boys. Most of them look so restlessly unhappy during that very long half hour, that my heart feels for them, the more that I know I share their sin, if it be a sin to be tired of a sermon. There is Willy Herbert, who wouldn't tell a lie or bully a little boy for all the world; is it to be counted a mark of diabolical nature in him that he yawns while listening to Mr. A.'s high-flown description of the blessings of a Christian, *i.e.*, a person who thinks and feels and talks as Mr. A. does? I remember when I was Willy's age, what a sore trouble Sundays and sermons were to me. And yet

the clergyman whose discourses I had to listen to twice a week was one of the best of clergymen. If we are to have preachers, give me such preachers. Loving and earnest in every word he said, he spoke as if he was eagerly entreating and yearning for us to fight by his side the battle he was fighting. Some said that he was not a good preacher, because he wanted logical arrangement, and frequently repeated himself. The charge was indeed true. He spoke of God, not with cold precision from a neat manuscript, but with whatever warm words came from the spirit within him, and he anxiously repeated again and again that it was good for us to serve Him. Never shall I forget that manly and yet tender voice, that seemed to pour out all the fire and love of a Christian heart, at times sunk to a whisper of adoring reverence, at times sounding like a trumpet in warning or command. But for all that, I sat for years in that man's church before I understood the meaning of his sermons, or discovered that I had any interest in the matter which he was pressing upon his hearers so importunately; and weary years of Sundays they were for me. My literary career began strangely enough in connexion with his sermons. Being required at the age of ten to give a synopsis of them to my tutor, I tried hard to follow him, but soon gave up the attempt in despair, and copying down a sentence here and there at random, filled up this skeleton with pious reflec-

tions of my own, which passed muster very creditably. This was deceitful on my part, no doubt, but was it altogether my fault !

Thus much concerning preachers and sermons ; too much, some people will say, blaming me for discussing matters which a dominie has nothing to do with. But he has, good readers ; it is his care and concern that his pupils be well taught in all wisdom. I confess the root of my bitterness against parsons is that I cannot preach myself on the holy day. I think myself to be a minister as well as they, not indeed a minister of the Church of England or of the Church of Rome, but a minister of God. And I should like to take some of my favourite boys into the country on Sunday, and there teach them about their Father in heaven. They do not see Him in the varnished pews, and the stained windows, and the gilt prayer-books ; but I think I could show Him to them in the bright sky, and the pleasant rain, and the cheery snow, and the sweet flowers, and the green leaves, and their own happy laughter. Taking such things for my texts, I should try to teach them that He is good and wise and loving, sending rain and sun on the just and the unjust, not willing that any should be sad or sinful, but yearning that all, from the least to the greatest, should know Him, and be happy in doing His will.

And I would do this because I am a stricter Sab-

batarian than many readers would fancy. I think that I obey that Fourth Commandment more rigidly than many do who profess greater strictness in doing so, and I would have all men obey it also. To those who make Sunday a day of utter sloth, to those who make it a day of thoughtless riot, and to those who make it a day of irreligious gloom, I would say with equal earnestness, 'Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.' But I say too, that, in the language of Heaven, if not in the Babel languages of our churches and chapels, to be holy means something else than to be weary and miserable.

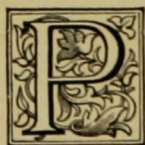


CHAPTER XVI.

OUR SCHOOLS.

'Tis not enough that Greek or Roman page
At stated hours his freakish thoughts engage.'

COWPER.



PARENTS are always asking my advice as to what schools they should send their sons to, and such advice is very difficult to give, especially if you do not know the boys. Physicians know that it is impossible to prescribe for a case which they have made no diagnosis of, and only very stupid people suppose that all medicines are alike good for every complaint. In the same way one boy will get on well at one school and one at another, and it is hard to recommend a school in the same confident way as you would recommend a butcher or a baker.

But let us take the case of an average English boy, neither miraculously good nor incorrigibly bad,

sound in wind and limb, free from those 'peculiarities' of temper for which doating parents so often ask us to make an allowance; fond of play, and not immoderately averse to study; in short, with no point of his disposition requiring extraordinary care or training, and let us consider the influence which different kinds of schools will have upon him.

I take it for granted that he ought to be sent to some school or other. There are some things which a boy learns from none so well as his parents, but there are others which are better taught him by men who have made education the study and business of their lives. And though it may seem rash and cruel to drive a boy out from the sanctuary of a quiet home into a scene where the darts of Satan are flying thick, yet it is really wise and kind. That fight must be fought by all, and if a man learn not in youth to face the noise and the dangers of the battle, he can scarce be firm and fearless in manhood. To have never met danger is not courage, nor is it innocence to be ignorant of evil.

In estimating the moral influence of any school, I think that the most important characteristic will be its size, and, for the purpose of comparison in this respect, I will divide all schools into small, middle-sized, and large, and proceed thus to my review.

By the small schools I mean those private establishments conducted generally by clergymen with

poor livings, who advertise themselves as residing in healthy situations in picturesque parts of the country, and undertaking to receive as members of the family, and educate, a number of the sons of noblemen or gentlemen, which, if not 'discreetly limited to two at most,' seldom exceeds six or seven. The advantages of such an establishment are evident. The pupils will be more closely watched, and receive more undivided attention than at a larger school. Their characters will be more closely studied, and more allowance will be made for their natural deficiencies, while more care will be taken to repair them. The gardener will constantly be at work, watering, pruning, and training. But your hot-house plants, though they bloom so brightly, cannot be exposed to the outside air with safety. Cultivation is good, but there is such a thing as over-cultivation, which turns healthy nature into a sickly growth of custom. The great evil of such schools is that the tone of feeling and manners, and cast of thought of the pupils, depend too much upon the influence of one man. If they are at all teachable, they learn to look upon things too much through their master's special spectacles. This would be well enough if their masters were all such men as Dr. Arnold; but how many country parsons are Dr. Arnolds? Or how many are narrow and prejudiced, and selfish and sanctimonious? Even if they be worthy, well-meaning men, I would grudge them the

exclusive right of moulding the young mind, which should grow up of its own accord, and flourish amid storm and sunshine, and many a breeze from the warm west and the chilly north. The sum of what I mean to say is this, that what is *taught* is not generally so valuable as what is *learned*. If the reader understands this distinction, he will perceive the reason why I should be reluctant to send a son of mine to be so thoroughly taught in a small school.

Middle-sized schools consist chiefly of establishments known often by such high-sounding names as colleges, institutions, or academies, which are carried on as private speculations by self-appointed 'principals.' I confess to a strong prejudice against such schools. The number of their pupils may be stated as between twenty and a hundred, and this seems to me a number which excludes the advantages both of large and small schools. It is too large to be altogether under the influence of one man, and it is too small for the development of a healthy condition of public opinion among the boys themselves. In a community of fifty boys there will always be found so many bad ones who will be likely to carry things their own way. Vice is more unblushing in small societies than in large ones. Fifty boys will be more easily leavened by the wickedness of five, than five hundred by that of fifty. It would be too dangerous an ordeal to send a boy to a school where sin appeared

fashionable, and where, if he would remain virtuous, he must shun his companions. There may be middle-sized schools which derive a good and healthy tone from the moral strength of their masters, or the good example of a certain set of boys; but I doubt if there are many. Boys are so easily led to do right or wrong, that we should be very careful at least to set the balance fairly.

There are two classes of such schools which I hold in utter abomination,—the one because I have had some experience of them, the other because I know nothing about them. I allude, in the first place, to the refined schools, which are so fast gaining favour among foolish parents, where there are no boys, but only young gentlemen, who have kid gloves and canes, and a high opinion of themselves. There are no floggings, nor playgrounds, nor stickjaw, nor any such vulgar institutions at these schools. Everything is managed on the silver-fork and coaxing principle. But though all this may be very pleasing to the doating fondness of mammas, and the vanity of boys, it is not at all good for the character of the men who are to be thus early trained into conceited puppies; and I think that all sensible people who wish their sons to be brought up as Christian gentlemen would agree with me, if they were as well acquainted with this evil as I am.

The other class of schools which I object to is one

which I know nothing of, save from the daily advertisements of scores of them in the *Times*. In these advertisements I see men professing to lodge, feed, and educate properly the sons of gentlemen for some such sum as twenty guineas a year, including books ; but from statistical knowledge of the quantity and quality of the mental and physical nourishment necessary for healthy boys who are to be brought up as gentlemen, and of the remuneration expected by butchers, bakers, and ' efficient assistant masters ' for the exercise of their professional services, I feel justified in saying either that an ugly appellation should be applied to the above-mentioned advertisers, or that—which of course is far more likely—philanthropy exists in this world to a much greater extent than is usually supposed, and is applied to educational purposes on a scale which should call forth a large measure of public gratitude to our unknown benefactors. But speaking from a mercenary point of view, I should think it impossible that such board, washing, and education as is promised in these advertisements could be contracted for at twenty guineas per annum, so as to leave any profit to the contractor ; and I am ashamed to say that I have so little confidence in the benevolence and disinterestedness of the advertisers, that I should be very cautious about sending my son to one of these loudly vaunted establishments.

There are of course hundreds of middle-sized schools throughout the country which do not come under these two classes. Some of them are doubtless good and some bad. Some are managed by wise and faithful dominies, some by mercenary quacks. But I repeat my belief, that *ceteris paribus* the moral tone of such a school will be peculiarly liable to be at the mercy of a set of bold and bad boys.

We now come to large schools, between whose advantages and disadvantages it will be more difficult to adjust the balance. These are almost exclusively long-established foundation schools, or modern schools conducted in imitation of their spirit and constitution.

The great advantage of public schools is that they are generally large enough to admit of a free and healthy tone of public opinion which will be a fair preparation for entrance into the world. Every boy's moral nature will be thoroughly ventilated, as it were, and his strength will be truly tested for the work he is being trained to do. He will learn to know himself and his position. He will have a free choice between good and evil, and whether he follow the one or the other, will do so with more steadfastness and honesty than if he had been forced into it by the vigilance of a tutor or the example of a petty clique of chance companions. He will be able to choose his friends and associates from some hundreds of boys of all

characters and dispositions, among whom, as in the great world, there will be various sets having little or no influence upon each other. All this does not in the least do away with the necessity for, and the advantage of, judicious control by superiors. But control can only be usefully exercised upon a nature that is developing itself honestly and naturally and fully ; and this effect at least will be produced by the influence of a large school.

Another advantage of a public school is that it is ruled by settled law and custom which all must obey, and not by the caprice of any one man, who himself is acted on by external influences. The head master of a public school is to some extent a despot. Being independent of all votes or supplies from parents, he can venture to carry things so far with a high hand, regardless of the whims and prejudices of his constituency, who, as I have already said, are far harder to manage than the subjects over whom they delegate authority to him. He can expel a bad boy without the fear of a curtain lecture from his wife on the text of an unpaid butcher's bill. He can even order the trouser-pockets of the whole school to be sewed up, like a second Czar Peter. Thus it will be seen that he has an enormous power to exercise for the good of the community over which he rules. And, on the other hand, even if he were inclined to exercise this power tyrannously and unjustly, there is a

certain unwritten charter which has been granted to public-school boys which he will not attempt to violate. His administration of justice will be founded on precedents and not on passion, and thus a certain sacredness will surround his judgments, and his boys' minds will be early imbued with a due respect for law, since they will see that the law is both strong and just. It is good that all boys learn this lesson, but how shall we teach them it, if we blow hot and cold at different times, and rule not according to statute but according to impulse, as most dominies will do more or less, if they be not restrained by some prescriptive rules?

But there is also much to be said against public schools. In the first place, I think the boys are allowed to have too much of their own sweet will. There is a want of proper supervision by masters out of school hours, which is as bad for boys as the opposite extreme of never allowing them to be out of sight of a master in their play-time, placing sentries over them in their bedrooms, and watching them even through spy-holes, as is done in the French Lycées. Hence the necessity of such a system as fagging, the very existence of which confesses the deficiency. This and the monitorial authority are much lauded by the advocates of juvenile self-government, and I confess that their arguments have a good deal of plausibility. But I know how difficult men find it

to rule justly, and therefore I doubt if big boys can be safely trusted with authority over their school-fellows. The worst feature, however, of the fagging and monitorial systems, is that they depend so much on mere brute strength. It is all very fine to talk of licking boys into their proper level, and thus teaching them to face the world ; but is it a useful or true lesson to teach them, that in a civilized and Christian world every man's hand is against his fellow, and might only is right ?

As a general rule, the number of masters at a public school is quite disproportionate to the number of boys, and thus the forms and the boarding-houses are, from their very size, unwieldy. I know a school where one master is expected to be able to teach from eighty to one hundred boys at once, and another where a young clergyman is supposed to stand *in loco parentis* to nearly as many. The consequence is that many boys leave these schools with less knowledge than when they entered them, and little more religious training than is implied in a parrot-like acquaintance with the liturgy, sleepily got over every morning in the school chapel. If any one questions this, let him try if he can see, in the course of an hour or so, that fifty boys have learned a lesson, and how far he can make these fifty boys listen to all he says for that time. Not one man in a hundred can perform such a task well ; and not one man in a hundred

can learn and work upon the character and habits of so many boys, and that one man only after being familiar with them for years.

I am sorry to say that a tone of puppyism prevails in some of our great public schools, which is much to be deplored. This arises, I think, from two causes. The first is that the pupils at these schools are generally the sons of rich men, and are allowed to have a great deal too much money—about the surest way of doing harm to boys which the devil has as yet invented. The sums which young gentlemen at Eton or Harrow spend on cricketing costumes and ices and beer, and other luxuries, would sometimes suffice to supply more than one industrious family with all the necessaries of life. Then the *esprit de corps* which public-school boys pride themselves on is pushed too far; and the way in which they look down upon ‘tother schoolmen’ is perfectly ridiculous. What would the good men who founded these charity schools—for nearly all of them were originally nothing else—say, if they could rise from their graves and see the airs which some swaggering little prigs give themselves. For which subject more fully treated, see my chapter on ‘YOUNG GENTLEMEN.’

This is a rough, but I think a fair, estimate of the difference between small, middle-sized, and large schools, though of course I know that there are many schools of all sizes having special merits or demerits,

which I have not space to discuss. And now I will describe the school to which I should like to send my son, if I had a son, and there were such a school.

I would have this school as large as possible, but I would have it divided into small classes or forms. This arrangement would require a large number of masters to carry it out, and I would appoint these masters not only because they were good scholars, but good men. As far as possible, I should try to secure that they should not be clergymen who cannot get livings, and have merely taken to teaching as a temporary expedient on the road to a bishopric or other dignity ; but men who have devoted their whole life to the work of teaching, and have their heart and soul in it.

I would not have the boys living together in large mobs, but would have them either residing with their parents, or boarded in small numbers with the masters, or other persons competent to take care of them. Thus the advantages of home-training and supervision out of school hours would be added to the healthy influence of mixing in a large society of boys.

The essence of my system of discipline would be a judicious control which should not be inconsistent with a due measure of freedom, nor prevent a boy's nature from healthily developing itself. I would make as few laws as possible, but would take care that they

be rigorously observed. I would try to teach the boys to take a pride in my system of discipline, remembering that the tone of feeling among themselves will always be more powerful than the anathemas of any dominie. I would on no account allow their parents to interfere with my regulations. If a boy obeyed me, well and good ; if he did not, he should be punished ; if that had no effect on him, he should leave the school. I would expel confirmed bullies and liars and foul-mouthed scoundrels with all possible marks of ignominy and loathing. I would have none but honest schoolboys, no young gentlemen. For these unhappy members of humanity I would provide a separate establishment on some desolate island, to which they might be banished till old enough to go to college.

My model school being thus constituted, I would open it to all boys whose parents could afford to pay its rather high charges, and to some who could not. And I would teach them—but it is useless to say what I think they ought to be taught. Education is conducted now-a-days on the commercial principle of demand and supply, and I fear that true wisdom is like to be a drug in the market.



CHAPTER XVII.

ON OTHER DOMINIES.

‘Public hackneys in the schooling trade,
Machines themselves and governed by a clock.’

COWPER.



COMMENCE this chapter with some diffidence. We dominies have so seldom a good word to say of each other, that I fear I may not do justice to my fellow-craftsmen. This is a sad fact, but a fact nevertheless, and the reason of it clear enough. We are so accustomed to have our own way and hear our own tongues going, that we do not make good society for each other. I believe the same rule holds good with crowned heads and country parsons. If there were a dozen emperors of Abyssinia living and ruling within a convenient distance of one another, we should find them by no means peaceable neighbours; and in the same way we dominies, so far as not bound over by Mrs. Grundy

to keep the peace, are given to sneer at the attainments and exertions of our brethren. I shall try, however, in this chapter to forget my professional feelings, and to speak charitably as well as truthfully.

I believe that the rude popular idea of a dominie is somewhat vague, a wig and a loud voice, with a tendency to quote Greek and Latin, being his only recognisable characteristics. But those who have dipped into stories of school life cannot fail to be more enlightened. They must have realized in their mind's eye, on the authority of such books, four distinct types as existing in the genus Dominie. These four types are obtained by the subdivision of school-masters into head-masters and assistants, and by a further distinction of public and private being made between the schools in which lie their respective spheres of action.

The highest type is of course the head-master of a large public school. This head-master is truly a most admirable and wonderful being, if we may believe the story-books through which alone he is known to that enormous majority of our countrymen who have not learned cricket and verse-making at a public school. He is an Olympian Jupiter, moving in awful state through time-honoured oaken chambers and grey cloisters, and with stern and serene equanimity launching his birchen thunderbolts at trembling delinquents. No doubt of his infallibility is ever

allowed to enter our minds—no suspicion that his temper may be sometimes irritable, or his digestion out of order. It is impossible to define clearly the corporeal image of him which rises before us. We know little about his appearance, and that little dazzles us. His private life is equally sacred and mysterious. No profane historian has yet ventured to follow him into the secret cell where it is to be hoped he sometimes ventures to put on his shooting-coat and slippers, and smoke a pipe and read *Punch*. True, *Tom Brown* has dared once, and once only, to introduce us to the dread Doctor in the midst of his family, but all of *Tom Brown's* followers have shrunk from imitating their leader's irreverence. No, in their pages he stands before us constantly in cap and gown, robed, moreover, in the dignity of boundless learning and power, for ever a king of boys and a mighty man upon earth, till the day when his pride and his power shall suddenly have an end, when for sins of his youth, not yet duly expiated, he shall be seized upon by the *locum tenens* for the time being of our head of the church, and, in spite of his pitiful cries of *nolo episcopari, nolo, nolo*, shall be remorselessly translated to a certain place in the House of Lords, reserved as a St. Helena for the despots of youth, thenceforth to live and die unpitied, unfear'd, unknown. In this case, Heaven grant him strength to keep his views on the Pentateuch and all other subjects to himself.

The assistant master of a public school is nearly always represented as an earnest and boyish young clergyman of unexceptionable morals and manners, and of strong opinions of the kind known as muscular Christian. He is addicted to playing cricket with the boys, and has favourites among them, whom he invites into his private room for confidential chats. He has a great horror of everything deceitful, and a sharp eye for all sorts of boyish tricks, not to speak of a preternaturally quick ear for false quantities. This is almost all we of the outer world know about him ; but if he is half as perfect as he is painted, he must indeed be a most estimable and amiable individual. Perhaps his pupils are not always of this opinion, however, till after the period of their pupildom, at least ; for although he is fond of handling the bat, he would also seem to be an adept in the use of the cane, and it may be supposed that he has a waste-paper basket in which he keeps all the Georgics he gives to be written out as *pænas*. By-the-bye, as the lay reader may sometimes wonder what becomes of these mountains of scribble paper at which naughty boys are set painfully and sorrowfully to labour, I will whisper into his ear, that we dominies use them to light our cigars with in the holidays.

The conventional head-master or 'principal' of a private school is not by any means such an awful being as the ruler of a great school. The former

wants much of both the power and dignity of the latter, and is often suspected of being liable to the common weaknesses of humanity. We hear of him making jokes and taking snuff. He has parlour boarders, who report that he eats a good dinner, and takes a nap after it. He does not confine himself to birching heinous offenders in secret state, but pervades the whole school, executing extemporary justice with canes, rulers, and other vulgar instruments ; besides which, he is given to getting angry, and thereupon to scolding and cuffing. He always is very polite to parents, often a little afraid of the big boys, and generally very fierce and terrible to the little ones, frowning at them, and calling them 'sir' in a way which is extremely appalling. He has his good-humoured moods too, and sometimes gives the boys a half holiday when he wants to go fishing, or has been promised a new pupil. He is invariably blessed with a terribly sharp and sensible wife, who sees that there is plenty of suet in the dumplings and not too much butter on the bread, and who passes the greater part of her existence alternately in running about from cupboard to cupboard with a bunch of keys, and in sitting over a pile of stockings requiring, though not always deserving, to be darned. By her aid our worthy schoolmaster is generally able to retire from business in due course of time, and passes the rest of his life in a far-off unknown lotus land, where dwell the dominies

who have had enough of scourging and scolding. It is remarked that nobody except Sterne ever saw a dead donkey. But who ever saw and spoke to in the flesh a retired dominie?

But if the woful tales which the story-books tell us of ushers be true, it is a mystery to me how the junior ranks of the profession are filled up. One would think that there are not enough spiritless scarecrows in Britain to teach its middle-class youth. For the usher is uniformly represented as a pale and interesting young man, dressed in seedy black, who has seen better days, and is not likely ever to see much worse ones. He is snubbed by his employer and his pupils alike, placed between two fires. He is not expected to have any opinions of his own. It is darkly whispered that it is part of his duty to eat the fat of the parlour boarders, and to brush the boots upon occasions. Were it not for his usefulness in this respect, the mistress of the house doesn't see what's the good of him, and wonders why her husband's strong arm and loud voice can't put as much learning as is at all desirable into his boys' heads. The boys daren't move or utter a sound before the master himself, but they have their revenge on the usher. They chalk the back of his coat, and put stones in his bed. They joke with him about his personal appearance. They revile and slander his relatives, real and fictitious. Under these circumstances it is

truly miraculous that the unhappy usher does not forthwith make away with himself; but in his life, as set forth by story writers, there is at least one bright spot of hope. The principal's daughter is very likely to be attracted by his melancholy and interesting looks. The usual results—for description of which see the *Minerva* press, *passim*—follow. The course of true love runs not smoothly for a little, troubled by the suspicious watchfulness of mamma and some of the sharper pupils, who, perhaps, try to jest with the mild usher on the subject of his attachment, and to their amazement get a box on the ear, and find that love can turn the lamb into a lion. At length, if no green-eyed monster blight their happy love, things go so far that the young lady threatens to starve herself, or gives mysterious hints as to the slimy bottom of the mill pond. Thereupon papa relents, and when the pupils return after the next holidays to resume their studies, they find their late victim prepared to tyrannize over them as son-in-law and partner.

These are the types of dominie whom we meet with in story-books. Do we meet with them in real life? Not often, I think. I, who have known many dominies, have found them to be much the same as other men, of many classes and characters, wise and foolish, grave and gay, good, bad, and indifferent. Let me try to call up before the reader's eye some samples of the profession.

First, we have Mr. A., called by his irreverent pupils 'Stiff Dick,' not so much because his Christian name is Richard, and his nature inflexible, as because his hard, mottled face bears some resemblance to a certain compound of that name, the ingredients of which are well known to housekeepers of boarding schools. From this it will be inferred that Mr. A.'s appearance is not prepossessing, and he certainly does not attempt to improve it by any external aid. For an incredible number of years he is fabled never to have been seen out of the same grim, old-fashioned suit of black, upon which, nevertheless, no spot nor stain is at any time visible. But no king robed in purple and adorned with barbaric pearl and gold could be an object of more terror to his subjects. Stiff Dick is stern, exact, inexorable. Alas! for the unhappy juvenile who, with trembling knees, beholds that cold grey eye fasten upon him, and hears that hard, immoveable voice speaking in his ears a Rhadamanthine sentence, from which there can be no appeal. Woe betide the boy who enters Mr. A.'s classroom with his hat on, or is detected whispering to his neighbour in school. Thrice fortified with oak and triple brass must his breast be, likewise his shoulders with towels or old copy-books, who dares venture on an untimely joke in that presence. How his pupils rejoice if, by any lucky chance, he is unable to do his duty! This seldom

happens though, for Mr. A. is one of those unhealthy looking men who are never ill. For years together he will never be absent, but day after day, punctual to a moment he is at his post, to put the same iron yoke on the necks of himself and his pupils. His enemies say he is cruel and unsympathizing towards boys; but one thing they cannot say, that he does not make them learn and behave themselves so long as they are under him. One effect of his so-called cruelty is, that he scarcely ever requires to punish his boys. More kindly dominies dribble out a far greater quantity of thrashing and scolding than he does, and yet do not produce one-half so much order and diligence. He acts on the principle of concentrating his forces and crushing the enemy once and for all. He is never seen by his boys to smile, or heard by them to utter an unnecessary word. His mood is invariable. He never allows either passion or good-nature to interfere with justice. And thus he is admired by sensible parents, and feared by boys as a good disciplinarian and successful teacher. At all events, he knows what he is teaching, and teaches it. So many dominies do not know what they are teaching, and teach it—the devil's lie, that this world is ruled by chance and caprice, and not by the strictest and most unalterable laws, which, if a man break, he shall have pain and sorrow.

A very different kind of dominie is Dr. B. (Ph.D.

University of Swillingen. Price £70.) The secret of B.'s life, which his boys more than half suspect, is that he is afraid of them. A man of low birth and scanty education, he feels no confidence in giving orders to the sons of men at whose table he could not dine without reverence and nervousness. He could hector about the little boys if he had not the fear of their mammas before his eyes, but he feels unfit to rule his older pupils; so he does all he can to make things go easy. He condescends! a dangerous experiment, if you have nothing to condescend from. He tries to imitate Dr. Arnold, and other great and good dominies, quite forgetting that all men are not Dr. Arnolds. He calls his boys 'you fellows,' and gets laughed at by them for his pains, and not always behind his back even. He tries to dress himself like them, in *soi-disant* fashionable apparel, and talks to them familiarly about their pursuits and pleasures. But it won't do. Unless you have a character which will bear the strictest investigation, you must never give your pupils cause to suspect that you are a creature of like passions with themselves. That gorgeous waistcoat which Dr. B. is fond of wearing would alone be enough to destroy his influence with the elder boys. He sometimes plays at cricket with them, and plays extremely ill. This is also a great mistake. A dominie should never do anything before his pupils which he can't do better than, or at least as

well as they. I don't know that the Prince of Wales would much increase his popularity among learned men if he were to undertake to deliver a course of lectures upon the Origin of Species ; certainly his dignity would suffer.

It will thus be easily seen that Dr. B.'s pupils look upon him neither with love nor esteem. Becoming occasionally sensible of this, he will try to mend matters by putting on a lion's head and roaring ; but they laugh at his bullying as much as his coaxing. Altogether, Dr. B. is not the sort of man I should choose to place my sons under, and yet I believe him to be a very common type of dominie.

Mr. C. is a man who should never have been a dominie. He is too much of a genius. He might do for a teacher at a University, where I am given to understand that the professor has nothing to do but talk, while the students all listen with the utmost attention and deference ; but he is not a good teacher of boys. They, his boys, however, highly approve of his method. He does not trouble them much with text-books or set lessons, but delivers to them long high-flown discourses on any subject that comes into his head. Upon the slightest provocation, he recites to them pages of his own poetry, throwing back his head and rolling out the words in a way that sounds very fine. You will see a class of little boys staring at him with great awe, wondering what it is all

about. He likes this, and thinks he is carrying them along with his enthusiasm. By-and-by, though, they get accustomed to it, and amuse themselves in his class by whispering, giggling, and pricking each other with pins ; so both parties are pleased, the road to knowledge being made pleasant and easy, though it may be doubted by the discerning spectator if much progress is made thereon. Occasionally he cannot resist the temptation of lying back in his chair and giving himself up to a poetic reverie, which of course his boys take advantage of for purposes which may be imagined. Thus it is that Mr. C., though the author of many clever books, is not a good teacher. He thinks he is, but in these matters vanity goes a long way. Vanity is the dominie's besetting sin, and in this respect at least Mr. C. is a true dominie.

It would be well if he taught his pupils no worse lessons than those which are contained in his poetry. It would be well if they could tell no tales of him lying like a beast in the gutter, unable to reach his own door. It would be well if scandal-mongering young gentlemen, returning at eleven o'clock from a juvenile scene of dissipation, had not met him reeling out of a public-house, arm-in-arm with a manifest son of Belial, both flown with insolence and whisky. Eccentricities of genius, some call this ; eccentricity of Satan, say I. Of all professions the teaching of

boys should be kept clear of such genius, unless ballasted by principle and common-sense.

Mr. C.'s great friend is Mr. D.—a foreigner. We old-fashioned dominies have a great prejudice against foreign teachers, and not without reason. As a rule they are unsatisfactory in many points. Mr. D. is a very good example of the class. He looks down upon the rest of us as slow and prejudiced. He has a large stock of theories on education, which we, in our insular stupidity, do not see the merit of. He has a theory for communicating knowledge in a particularly rapid way; and this theory seems so far successful that his pupils forget what he has taught them with as much readiness as he professes to make them acquire it. He has a theory for maintaining discipline in his classes without punishment. He has a theory for gaining the respect of his pupils. He has a theory for inoculating them with a spontaneous love of all the virtues. And you should hear him groaning over the depravity of the juvenile heart which does not appreciate him and his theories.

One disagreeable peculiarity of Mr. D. is that he is always labouring under pecuniary difficulties and wanting to borrow money. It is very distressing that people won't give large incomes to teachers of languages; and in this sad case what can be more natural than that a person of a theoretical and imaginative disposition should be in nowise hindered

from launching out into expenses in the matter of clothes, suppers, and cigars, as it were, obtaining from society on credit the luxuries that she denies him as a right. And if society, as represented in the persons of deluded tradesmen, refuse to recognise the justice of this reasoning, and threaten actions at law and other practical arguments, money must be borrowed, the Utopian age, when clever men shall have as much as they please of that vile dross, not yet having come. Wherefore Mr. D. is shunned by his brother dominies, except C., who never has any money to lend.

Both D. and C. are held in great contempt by Mr. E., who has been described as the 'heaven-born dominie.' Pallas-like, he is fabled to have been born with a Latin grammar in one hand and a cane in the other. No one can imagine him ever to have been a boy, or anything else than a dominie; and yet a boy he must have been, and a very naughty boy too, so sharp is he at finding out all the misdoings of the boys who have the ill-fortune to be placed under him. It is a grand sight to see that energetic little man managing a class of a hundred boys. Not a word dare one of them speak, not a trick can they play, for Mr. E. seems to have eyes all round his head, and comes down upon them in a moment. Boys are his element. I don't know that he has any great affection for them, but he under-

stands them thoroughly, and can rule them with a rod of iron. Not an unkindly man, though. He can be gentle and patient with the timid boys, and though he is sharp and severe with the naughty ones, he has generally a laugh or a joke to sweeten the stripes which he inflicts. So, many of the boys like him, and all respect him. They take a pride in boasting of his sharpness and of the vigour with which he can thrash. When they meet him on the street they look at him with great awe. He is a public character to them, and they think themselves highly honoured if he lifts his stick to his hat in return for their humble salutation. How they would be astonished if they saw what a meek and altogether ordinary individual their tyrant is at home, where Mrs. E. looks after him very sharply, I can tell you.

I had intended to present the reader with portraits of other dominies, but looking over the descriptions I have already written, I find them so faithful—in my own opinion at least, which is all I have to go by—that I fear to raise up in wrath a host of dominies who may find my caps fit, and will thenceforward look upon all their literary friends with bitterness and suspicion. So here I shall forbear, hastily huddling up my chapter with a few words on the Ideal dominie.

The ideal dominie is, of course, a man possessed of all good qualities, and especially of those which will

gain him the obedience and affection of his pupils. He is wise without being pedantic, firm but not harsh, active though not meddling. His digestion is never out of order, and consequently he never loses his temper, but is always considerate with the thoughtless, patient with the slow and timid. Yet he can summon up noble anger against the sneak and the bully, and knows how to record in burning words the 'sentence of the liar's and the coward's hell.' He thoroughly understands the nature of boys, and is well acquainted with all their tricks; but he knows when to see, and when seeing, not to seem to see. He conducts himself towards them in such a way as to invite their friendship, and at the same time to check familiarity. He shows a warm interest in all their pursuits, and fills them with part of his own enthusiasm for whatever things are lovely and useful and of good report. He is in manners and appearance a thorough gentleman, and in all his words and deeds an earnest Christian. Thus he lives happy, honoured, and useful, and will die lamented and remembered.

Do I, the censurer of other dominies, answer to this picture? Alas! no. God knows how hard I try to do so, and He knows too how much harder I should try. But there are such men, and I, for my part, would rather be one of them than emperor of half the world.



CHAPTER XVIII.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A DOMINIE.

‘My days are almost done,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved.’—WORDSWORTH.

SEVERAL of the members of a class which was under me half-a-dozen years ago have lately formed themselves into a club, the main purpose of which is to entertain me at dinner every year. This is done, I believe, partly from a desire to do me honour, partly that old school friends may meet and keep up their acquaintance with each other, and partly as an outward and visible sign that the givers of the feast are no longer boys but men.

The first dinner of the club took place a few days ago, and I was very well pleased to attend it, though the feelings were curious and novel enough with which I met those young men, but a few years ago

the objects of my most anxious thoughts, now almost strangers to me.

The affair went off very well. Of course my health was clamorously drunk as the toast of the evening, the chairman rather nervously making a grandiloquent speech in my laudation. I don't suppose all he said about me was true, if so, I am about the most perfect character that ever existed on the face of the earth, except in epitaphs and after-dinner speeches. Then came more speeches and songs, and a constant buzz of animated conversation, for by this time the young men had all found their tongues, and were eagerly employed in raking up stories of the old school days that already seemed so far away in the past. I did not stay long, thinking my presence a check on the lads' conviviality ; for while a few assumed a very swaggering and independent tone in my presence, as if to show that times had changed, most of them were rather shy, not yet having been able to divest themselves of their boyish awe, and feeling towards me very much like the old gentleman Thackeray tells us of, who could not realize the idea that Dr. Birch was impotent to whip him.

So I went home, but not to sleep. For this meeting with voices and faces not yet grown unfamiliar to me, had roused up memories of days gone by, which it was hard to set at rest. I remembered how these very young men, with shorter coats and smoother

faces, had laughed, and trembled, and fidgeted, and blundered under my yoke. And I remembered almost as vividly the first class I ever taught in this city—with what zeal and care I worked for their benefit, with what joy and interest I watched the progress they made, what hopes I had for the future lives of the most promising among them, what fears and doubts for the backward. But these hopes and fears and doubts were not altogether justified by events. There is Smith, who was always at the head of the class, and whom I expected to become Prime Minister, at least in the due course of time, but who is at present a very common-place, middle-aged gentleman, leading a comfortable and respectable life as manager of a country insurance office. And Brown, whose fond parents thought of putting him into the Church, and whose talents seemed to point the way to nothing less than an Archbishopric, if he did not spoil his chance by adopting any very marked theological opinions, in which case he would become a fashionable preacher at a chapel of ease, and a stumbling-block to the *Record* or the *Guardian*; Brown, who got so many prizes, ran away from home, enlisted in the marines, and is said to have been eaten by a shark off the Barbadoes. While that stupid fellow Jones, who sat hopelessly at the bottom, and showed capacity for nothing but poking pins into other boys' legs, has developed that solitary talent to such a purpose, that he is now a well-known surgeon

and anatomist, making his thousands a year. He came to perform an operation upon me lately, and with more humour than good taste, reminded me of the painful operations which my professional duties once compelled me to perform upon him, and as a proof that he bore no malice, refused to take my guinea ; a very unnecessary scruple, it struck me, as I can safely aver that the ability which has led him to such a high place in his profession was in no manner due to the mental exercise which he underwent in my class, unless indeed constant flogging be efficacious for the secret development of unknown genius. And Robinson, who I always thought would go to the dogs, went to India instead as a beardless ensign, showed great pluck and prudence in command of an out-station attacked by the enemy, rose rapidly to high command, and has written his name in the imperishable rolls of Clio with the letters K.C.B. after it. So true is it that boys are but 'pretty,' or ugly, 'buds unblown,' from the appearance of which it is not always safe to judge the flower.

What says the poet, *par excellence*, of schoolboy life, in writing of old companions who were not as 'once he knew them ?'

'Tom Mill was used to blacken eyes
Without the fear of sessions ;
Charles Medlar loathed false quantities,
As much as false professions.

Now Mill keeps order in the land,
A magistrate pedantic,
And Medlar's feet repose unscanned
Beneath the wide Atlantic.

Wild Nick, whose oaths made such a din,
Does Dr. Martext's duty ;
And Mullion, with that monstrous chin,
Is married to a beauty.
And Darrell studies, week by week
His Mant, and not his Manton ;
And Ball, who was but poor at Greek,
Is very rich at Canton.'

But there are some boys whose career I could almost prophesy from the time of my first making their acquaintance : Robert Goodboy, for instance. Master Bobby was one of those wonders seldom intrusted to the care of sceptical and inconsiderate dominies. The list of his perfections summed up to me by his mamma when she first brought him to school, was something truly amazing, and only to be equalled by the fresh springs of virtue which she discovered in him from time to time, and duly informed me of on visiting days. Nor, when I came to know the prodigy, did I find these perfections so imaginary as as they are in the minds of most fond mammas. He was a painfully good boy. He never was idle or naughty ; at least he never was found out. He always learned his lessons well, and got all the prizes. He never wasted his time in shouting or scrambling or wrestling with the other boys. He

never went home with his collar crushed or his trousers muddy. He was always *so* neat and clean and proper-looking. He kept at a distance from the other boys, and was so proudly conscious of his own rectitude that he sometimes volunteered to tell me of their misdeeds, and I daresay had his equanimity afterwards disturbed by a good kicking for his pains. Thus he passed through the school with a great reputation for scholarship and good behaviour, but without profiting by the lessons of courage, frankness, and unselfishness which are to be learned among honest, kindly boys, and which I would far rather see a boy learn than all the Latin and Greek in the world.

I can't say that I was very sorry to part with my friend Master Goodboy, though he had gained me so much credit in the eyes of his admiring parents and friends. Of many boys I take leave with dread and anxiety, loving them much and knowing that their hearts are weak and their passions strong. But I had no fear for his welfare. From his infancy success in life had been the object held up by his judicious father for him to aspire to, and I felt sure that in one sense of the word he would be successful in life, and I was right. He distinguished himself at the university, and became a lawyer, and a most able and diligent one. He grew into practice and a large income, and is now known all over the city as a most respectable and wealthy man, and is

bringing up a large family to walk in the same paths of propriety and prosperity. He is also a great man in a certain section of the religious world, whose views he adopted early in life, and thereupon began to shun my acquaintance and to speak doubtfully of my moral character, professing to have discovered that I was unsound in my views of justification by faith. A most respectable and honourable man, no doubt, but I never heard of his making a friend or doing an unselfish action, or lifting a finger—except by way of subscription—against the sin and sorrow that oppress his less favoured fellow-creatures. Perhaps I do him wrong, but I cannot think of him without reflecting how little it profits man or boy to gain prizes and scholarships and thousands a year if he grow not brave and kindly and noble.

Robert Goodboy's great rival in the class was Frank Favourite, who was as clever and idle and open-hearted as Robert was industrious and reserved. Frank was every one's friend but his own; he was carelessly condescending even to the sneaks and the boobies. But he was spoiled by too much friendship, for his companions flattered him and paid him the homage of boyish admiration, dazzled by his handsome face and graceful figure. Boys worship beauty more than would be supposed, especially when joined to strength and courage. He was their leader in every game, and first in every study to which he

thought it worth while to apply himself. But to some dispositions admiration is a deadly poison. Frank was a sad example of this. As he grew into the passions and the thoughts of manhood, his vanity increased, and drowned in his heart much of his purer nature. The sky of his life seemed bright and clear, and the breeze was fair, and he saw not the rocks that lay hid beneath the smooth waves. And he listened to the sirens singing sweetly that good was evil and evil good, and he shunned not the island of Circe whereon grew tempting fruits, bright and blooming to the eye, but bitter and baneful to the soul. I saw his danger and earnestly warned him of it, telling him of the perils and sorrows that beset the way of life, and the laws of God that no man can despise and be in safety. But he heeded me not, and proud in his youth and his strength, went on to his fate, which in time he met. For thoughtless pleasure led on to folly, and folly to crime, crime done in a moment and blasting a lifetime. He awoke then, and knew that he had foundered in storm and darkness. And then he found the worth of the friends who had once flattered and followed him. They still agreed that he was 'a fine fellow,' and pitied his misfortunes, but being now steady respectable men of business, they 'could not see their way' to help him. If he had come to me I would have welcomed and forgiven him, and done my best to raise him from the slough into which he had fallen.

But no, he was too proud to humble himself thus, having long ago left me in disgust, thinking me a mouldy old owl, that loved the shade and hated the sunshine. And he did not turn to the Teacher whose lesson he had neglected to learn, praying to be forgiven and chastened and taught anew—at least we fear not. For the proud spirit that had led him into such trouble gave way under it; and he did that which placed him beyond human help. He shot himself in despair, or as the coroner's jury, being good-natured men, more delicately called it, 'temporary insanity.' How many perish thus from that fearful insanity which makes them forget the end and conditions of their being!

There was a boy in that class whom Frank, with all his geniality, might have passed with a scornful nod, or perhaps with a patronizing kick. He was slow and awkward, and sullen and cowardly, and lived a sad and a solitary life among his school-fellows, branded by them with the name of 'Muff.' He could not run, nor fight, nor play cricket, and he cried when he was hurt, and trembled and equivocated when he was going to be punished. I, with foolish haste, agreed to the verdict of his companions, and put him down as a hopelessly bad boy, and if I had known his parents, would have advised them to remove him from the school. And, actuated by dislike and contempt almost as much as by just

severity, I did my share to make his life wretched. I afterwards bitterly repented of my rash and hasty opinion of him. But I was young then, and had not learned how closely evil and good are often interwoven in the heart. It was so with him, for though he sometimes lied and sulked and sneaked, he had within the seeds of a nobler life, seeds which ripened in time to a warm love for things lovely and of good report, and an earnest desire to follow these things. One day I was astonished to find him exposing himself to punishment rather than deceive me in a way which the conventional morality of schoolboys does not teach them to regard as shameful. After this I watched him closely, and was able to perceive that his heart had been breathed upon by the mysterious Spirit that bloweth where it listeth; and for years afterwards, as long as he remained under my care, I saw from afar off, as it were, and rejoiced in the conflict between good and evil which had been stirred up within him. The good conquered, and the boy whom I had despised grew strong in heart, and bravely wrestled with sullenness, idleness, and cowardice, and all his besetting sins. When he left me he went to the university, and in due time became a clergyman, and is now fighting against the poverty, misery, and ignorance of one of our large towns, the same good fight as he once fought against Satan in his own heart. And whenever I hear him

preach, I feel humble and ashamed, and resolve to beware of judging rashly of that which no human eye can discern fully.

Another clergyman, who was in the same class, was John Standfast. He was a sterling boy, and one could perceive his value at a glance. Genial and spirited, and moderately industrious, he was a favourite both with his school-fellows and his masters. Above all, we loved him because he spoke the truth. Whatever might be the consequences, no lie or equivocation ever faltered from his lips, and his eye looked unflinchingly into yours, even while you were unlocking the sacred drawer, and drawing forth the fatal instrument of punishment. He seldom had to be punished, and, when he had, took it without a murmur, if he knew he had deserved it. He loved justice with the true love of a high-spirited boy. I remember one day being in doubt whether I should allow Master Goodboy to go above him and be marked at the head of the class or not. From the circumstances of the case I felt a delicacy in giving judgment, and appealed to the opinion of the whole class. They almost unanimously pronounced in favour of John, and the affair was, as I thought, settled. But he stood up and said that he thought the other boys were wrong, and that he should lose his place. I ordered it to be so, without comment ; but I could have hugged him with delight.

Another incident showed more clearly his character and the part he was to play in after life. I had just finished punishing a boy who was his *fidus Achates*, when I heard a voice very audibly exclaiming 'Cheat !' It took me a minute to recover from the shock of this unusual interruption, and then I asked who had spoken. There was a pause, during which the boys looked wonderingly at each other, and then Standfast stood up. 'Did you use that word?' 'Yes,' he answered in a low tone, his face growing crimson. 'And did you apply it to me?' 'Yes,' in a still lower tone. 'What did you mean?' 'I thought you were unjust to —.' I made a slight gesture, which he misunderstood, and was coming boldly out to take his punishment ; but I ordered him to sit down again, and rather to his own surprise, and that of the class, took no further notice of the matter till school was over. I then had a long private talk with him, in which I pointed out to him that his friend had clearly deserved punishment, and that even if I had been wrong, it was not any boy's place to correct me in such a summary fashion. John had already begun to repent of his hasty enthusiasm, and he was quite convinced by my arguments that he had done wrong, and most amply apologized both at once and afterwards in presence of the whole class. But I thought all the better of him for it, and I often afterwards thought of this incident when he had gained a certain

notoriety by presuming to doubt the infallibility of more dignified teachers.

John went into the Church, and there ran his head against the dogmas of certain learned doctors who affirmed that God had said so and so, which it seemed to his mind it would be wrong even of God to say. Yet he could not say that God was unjust, not because he feared, but because he loved Him and wished to believe in Him. It was a sore trial for his brave, honest heart, whose notions of right and wrong were thus shaken. At length, like a flash of light, it came into his mind that after all God might be true and men only the liars; and thereupon, casting the authority of the church and the learned doctors to the winds, he rose up from the quagmire of doubt, and strong in the strength of humble hope and loving faith, set himself to find out as wisely and diligently as he could what God *had* said, and to do his best to preach that and nought else to a world sadly deaf to such sayings. And the conclusion he came to was that it was very easy to say what was God's word, but very difficult to say what was not God's word. And this conclusion was so different from that of certain other reasoners on the subject, that some of these felt it their duty to proclaim him a herald of Antichrist. But he worked on and cared not, or tried to care not, and to look only to God, who knew his heart. It was a hard fight that he fought, for both

the friends of Satan and many of those who called themselves the friends of God were his foes. At length, faint with wounds and tired of the dust and the shouting of the battle, he passed away, leaving behind him unseen but lasting monuments in the hearts of those whom he had rescued from darkness and led into light. And though he was so 'unsound,' I have no fears for his welfare in the next world, such as I should have if the editor of the *Christian Chronicle* were the judge of heaven as well as of earth.

Charley Tender was a very different boy, and made a very different kind of parson. He was always timid and gentle and delicate, and the other boys laughed at him for his girlish features and fair silken locks, though on the whole he was a pet and a favourite among them. Master Charley was rather dreamy and idle, but I am afraid I did not do my duty to him, and may therefore be blamed by stern persons of Calvinistic persuasions for his subsequent perversions. He was so tender and fragile-looking that I never could bear to flog him, especially when he looked up into my face with his mild blue eyes in a way which seemed amply to confess his fault and to plead for mercy. This always disarms me. When a boy is bold and defiant, I have no difficulty in thrashing him *ex sententia*, but it is hard to steel the heart and be cruel towards one who is penitent and submissive. And so Charley got off many a well

deserved chastisement, and never excelled at anything except making sentimental poetry, which was an intellectual exertion far more pleasant to him than the mastery of hard facts and dusty theories. He seemed fit, indeed, only to lie on the rose leaves of life, and I feared for him if he should be exposed to the keen blasts and the pelting hail.

He went into the Church, and became a very earnest clergyman, after a particular type of earnestness which is much in vogue at present. He rejoiced greatly at the wisdom of the Church and the Fathers, and mourned pathetically over the vulgar, prosaic perversity of Dissenters and all other unhappy persons led astray by the devil. He made himself dear to the ladies of his flock by the gentleness and fragileness which are so becoming to young curates, and look so very like the highest form of sanctity. He quarrelled with the men—how he ever could have quarrelled with any one I can't imagine—about his way of conducting the services, in which certain keen-eyed Protestants thought they could perceive the hand of the Scarlet Woman. And when the recent Ritualistic movement began to agitate the Church, it may be certain that Charley threw himself into it heart and soul. Despising the scruples of a crass and prejudiced vestry, he would have lavished all his small patrimony upon candles and flowers and vestments, by which men of his turn of mind seriously and sin-

cerely believe that they can please the Maker of all things. He furthermore began to hint at a mysterious priestly power which he possessed, and to renounce the time-honoured name of Protestant. These proceedings roused such a storm among his sober parishioners, that in spite of the sympathy and silent support of many enthusiastic maidens, he found the place grow too hot for his tender nature, and fled for refuge to a community of monks lately established before the very nose of the *Record*. They received him with joy, cropped his hair, called him after the name of some forgotten saint, and thenceforth Charley disappeared from the world. I have heard that he is killing himself by fasts and penances and vigils, and that he has expressed himself ready to glorify God by his death. Opinions differ, but for my part I should have more respect for a God who is to be glorified in healthy life and activity.

And many other boys I could tell about who are just the same to-day as I knew them at school, and have been distinguished in life for the same qualities that marked them there. I remember how Dick used to hold himself aloof from the other boys, and skulk about the secret corners of the playground with a scowl on his face, though he was so kind-hearted that he wouldn't hurt a fly. He said such clever things sometimes, but he did nothing but dream over his lessons, and behaved so oddly that he went by the

name of 'Madman.' He is a celebrated author now, of the cynical and denunciatory type, and some people still call him mad, especially those whom he has lashed with his satirical invectives ; but there must be some method in his madness, or else rumour lies as to the large sums which he is said to receive for his writings. Then Tom, who as a boy was always so pompous, one might easily have known that he would come to be an alderman and a great local politician. And Harry, who got the Victoria Cross the other day, used to fight with his friends of all sizes at school, in the same dogged and dauntless way which the Russians and the Sepoys afterwards had such sad experience of.

But once summon forth the shadowy train of the Past, and it is hard to cry 'cease.' Memories of all my life come crowding before my eyes, filling my heart with a pleasant pain and a sweet bitterness. The memory of my childhood comes back to me with a dream of kindly words and loving faces and bright flowers and merry sunshine, and childish pleasures and sorrows that are pleasures and sorrows no more. Then the hopeful flush and strength of youth, and the earnest battle of manhood, and the cares and the labours that are perhaps vain in the sight of man but fruitful in the sight of God. And after all, to be alone !

Alone, yet not alone. For I know that God is with me, not on particular days nor in particular buildings, but throughout my life and till death. I may seem to some to speak pharisaically; but I must speak the truth. I am proud and thankful that He has not made me as other men, drunkards, adulterers, extortioners, revilers, but has turned my heart to seek after the wisdom of the just. And I am humble too, knowing how little I am worthy of such blessing. But ought I not to rejoice?

At any rate, whatever may be my joys and sorrows, they are but for a little while. I am at school in this world, and, like my school-fellows, I am blundering, and careless, and ignorant. But I shall soon be summoned to the presence of the Great Teacher, from whose lips I shall learn clearly and perfectly the lesson of life—in a little while.

Very solemn should be the recollections of one drawing near to the end of life. Alas for him who then looks down the long vista of years and sees nought but the wrecks of wasted strength and empty pleasures and broken vows! Happy will he be who knows that he has tried to be brave, and pure, and useful, and having laboured faithfully to spend the talents committed to him, waits in humble hope for the day when the angel chorus will come forth to meet him with their glad welcome, when every tear of earth shall be wiped away from his face, and he shall

join the glorious multitude for whom their Father's love has conquered Satan, and sin, and sorrow, and brought them to dwell for ever in the city of the Lord.

I may have failed to make it clear whether the dominie's life is the happiest or the most miserable lot on earth. Perhaps in my inmost heart I am not altogether certain on this point myself. But this I am sure of, that the diligent and faithful dominie shall have a better and more enduring reward than aught of earthly joys and sorrow can either make or mar.

